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Blair fights to repair Labour split over Harman

By Philip Webster and Jill Sherman

TONY BLAIR was struggling to contain the most serious breakdown of party discipline under his leadership last night after staking his authority on keeping Harriet Harman in his frontbench team.

Labour is now split at all levels over whether she should remain as Shadow Health Secretary, and the issue of her son's education has turned into one about Mr Blair's control of his party.

The Labour leader has given her his outright backing, but his deputy, John Prescott, is deeply unhappy about her decision to send her son to a grammar school and scarcely more pleased about Mr Blair's decision to support her.

Although Mr Prescott's office denied that he and Mr Blair had had a row, a curt statement suggested less than wholehearted endorsement. He said: "Tony Blair as leader of the Labour Party has made clear what the position is and I have nothing to add."

This morning Ms Harman will face her internal critics at the Parliamentary Labour Party's weekly meeting, where she will explain her decision to send her son to St Olave's school in Orpington and voice regret for the trouble it has caused Mr Blair and the party.

Then she will confront her Tory tormentors in a Commons debate on the health service, which some Labour MPs have threatened to boycott in protest at her move,

which many have labelled hypocritical.

Yesterday, her choice of school for 11-year-old Joseph gave Mr Blair his darkest day since he took charge and a confident John Major one of his best. The Prime Minister was roared on by Tory MPs as he taunted Mr Blair with a mocking paraphrase of his anti-crime slogan, telling him that he was to be "tough on hypocrisy and tough on the causes of hypocrisy".

Mr Blair conceded that he was under pressure but added that the difference between him and Mr Major was that he would not "buckle under it".

While Labour MPs said that Mr Blair had performed as well as could be expected, they admitted that the party had suffered its most torrid mauling for many months. They watched gloomily as the Tories gleefully seized on Mr Blair's discomfort, and the stony-faced Mr Prescott made little attempt to hide his feelings.

Mr Blair nevertheless gave Ms Harman his "unequivocal" backing last night and close aides said that he expected Labour MPs to close ranks behind her in the face of "squalid hounding" by the Conservatives.

For most of yesterday, however, Ms Harman's most visible opponents were in her party. Several frontbenchers criticised her privately and said she should go, while her

Shadow Cabinet allies were noticeable by their absence from Westminster corridors and none publicly defended her.

Doug Hoyle, chairman of the parliamentary party, went to see Mr Blair on Monday night to warn him of the extent of MPs' anger, and a number of MPs openly called for her resignation yesterday. Terry Lewis MP for Worsley, accused her of "hypocrisy of the highest order", adding: "I think she should resign and shouldn't have hesitated one minute."

Ms Harman, who spent yesterday in her office working on her speech for today's debate, was said to be "shellshocked" and members of Mr Blair's close circle were deeply dispirited. "After all we have done to tighten up our act, today we have looked like a rabble, nothing less," one senior frontbencher told *The Times*. "If we lose our discipline like this we lose everything. It is a disgrace that shadow ministers should behave like this."

Most agreed that it would be impossible for Mr Blair to sack Ms Harman, but some suggested that she should resign. If she were to go now, though, it would be a crippling blow to Mr Blair's leadership.

One Shadow Cabinet member said reluctantly that there was no alternative but for her to tough it out. "If she was going to go she should have resigned on Saturday. To resign now would look as if she had been pushed."

Another MP said: "It has become an issue about the Labour Party now. You cannot defend the indefensible. It is better for the party for her to go. Tony won't be able to sack her. She should stand down."

Labour was dealt a further blow yesterday when it emerged that another of the party's MPs has two sons at grammar schools. Tony Wright, the MP for Cannock and Burntwood, has one son at Five Ways School, Bartley Green, and another at Handsworth Grammar School for Boys, Birmingham. Both are strictly selective, with entrance dependent upon an 11-plus exam.

The disclosure took Dr Wright's agent, Mrs Muriel Davis, by surprise. "No doubt some people in the constituency will be upset with him, but we shall talk about this in the party not in the press."

Dr Wright defended himself, saying: "The duty of every parent is to try to give their children a decent education."

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Under new management: Granada may sell Forte's 68 per cent Savoy group stake

Granada ends Forte era with £3.8bn bid victory

By Alasdair Murray

GRANADA yesterday sealed victory in the £3.8 billion battle for control of Forte, ending the Forte family's 60-year reign at the hotels, roadside cafe and restaurant company they founded.

Granada, the leisure and television company, secured the acceptance of 67 per cent of shareholders, giving the company a surprisingly comfortable win in what had been one of the hardest fought bid battles of recent years.

A jubilant Gerry Robinson, chief executive of Granada, expressed his delight at the outcome but praised the defence put up by the Forte family. He said: "Sir Rocco and his colleagues put up a powerful and spirited defence. Our job now is to take full advantage of the potential for the benefit of existing and new shareholders alike."

A subdued Sir Rocco put on a brave face as he left his headquarters at High Holborn in central London to contemplate an uncertain future. He said: "Naturally we are all disappointed but I am proud of the people of Forte and their commitment which has created such a value for shareholders. I would like to thank them and all those who have supported us, both inside and outside the company."

He added: "This was a battle between two opposing philosophies. We have lost the bid — I do not believe that we have lost the argument."

Of Granada's success he said: "People liked the money. What lost it? At the end of the day, the value of the bid, I think we will have a lot of happy shareholders out there."

The Granada team knew for certain that it had passed the 50 per cent threshold needed

for a successful takeover at 2.30pm. The company dismissed suggestions that a decision by Mercury Asset Management — which holds 14 per cent of Forte shares — to throw its weight behind the Granada bid had clinched the deal.

Mr Robinson refused to comment on the immediate future for Sir Rocco and his staff but said that Granada's management would meet their Forte counterparts. It is



Forte: battle between two philosophies

unlikely, however, that Sir Rocco will continue at the company.

Sir Rocco and his family do have the consolation of an 8.4 per cent stake in Forte worth around £300 million. Sir Rocco's personal stake is worth about £50 million, although he increased that stake last Friday, having borrowed £14 million to buy a further 0.4 per cent of the shares. But he is

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Major savours joy at the slaughter

ST OLAVE is the patron saint of Norway, and the sun is said to have eclipsed when they slaughtered him in 1030 near Trondheim. 966 years later, an even greater miracle occurred. John Major slaughtered Tony Blair at Westminster.

Whatever horrors may lie in store for this premier, they will never obliterate the memory. Fifteen short minutes supplied Mr Major with joy of a more concentrated kind than he has relished in a decade. Compared with this, years of misery and frustration seemed as nothing. As he paused to acknowledge the roars of support from the government benches, an expression lit Mr Major's face such as can hardly be seen anywhere but on babies at the breast.

Whatever triumphs may lie in store for Tony Blair, none will quite erase the horror of that same quarter hour. How,

after 18 months of cruising in open water at full steam, could he have hit as cruel a rock, as hard, as suddenly, as this? With John Prescott's face beside him black as thunder and, from the backbenches behind, the silence that claws into a man's back, the Opposition Leader's countenance, pale, jaw working, was a study in cold rage.

Matthew Parris

People will write that Mr Major put in a champion performance but, such was the mood, he could have recited *Three Blind Mice* and sounded deadly. As for Mr Blair, there was nothing he could say. Kenneth Baker almost gargled his welcome (for Harriet Harman) to

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Rape charge over schoolgirl 'bride'

A Turkish waiter who "married" a 13-year-old British girl was charged with rape and holding her by force yesterday. Musa Komecoglu, 18, was detained in custody overnight in southeast Turkey and will appear before a judge today.

Sarah Cook, from Braintree, Essex, is understood to have had a medical examination by a police doctor after accompanying her husband to the public prosecutor's office.

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Britain told to drop IRA gun demands

By Nicholas Watt, Ireland Correspondent

BRITAIN will come under pressure today to drop its insistence that the IRA must begin to disarm before all-party talks when the International Commission on Terrorist Arms reports that the demand is impractical.

In one of the peace process's most important developments, the commission is expected to recommend instead that a gesture on arms could be made by terrorists once all-party talks have started.

Its carefully worded report, to be published in Belfast this morning, balances its position on arms by recommending political parties would help the peace process by agreeing to a series of confidence-building measures.

It is understood the most important of those would be an undertaking to accept the outcome of all-party negotiations. The Commission is expected to add that any party rejecting an agreement reached at talks should undertake to oppose it by peaceful and political methods.

George Mitchell, the commission chairman, and his two colleagues, are understood to have taken great care in the wording of the 20-page report. They deliberately do not lay down demands, hoping to win wide support.

The British and Irish Governments, which appointed the commission in November, are expected to issue a joint statement today. Sir Patrick Mayhew, Northern Ireland Secretary, is likely to give it a cautious welcome in a Commons statement.

John Major and senior ministers studied the report at a Cabinet committee meeting yesterday.

First novel wins Whitbread Prize

A first novel by Kate Atkinson last night won the £21,000 Whitbread Book of the Year award.

The Moor's Last Sign by Salman Rushdie had been heavily tipped to take the prize, presented at a dinner in London. Kate Atkinson's *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* was chosen after an hour's debate by the nine judges.

Another two staff walk out on the Princess

By Alan Hamilton

TWO more employees of the Princess of Wales left their jobs yesterday as she began the search for a new private secretary to replace Patrick Jephson, who walked out on Monday.

The Princess now has only two secretarial staff after the resignation yesterday afternoon of Nicky Cockell, 32, who had been employed at St James's Palace to help Mr Jephson.

Stephen Davis, 31, the Princess's

regular chauffeur, also announced that he was leaving on the expiry of his contract, reducing her domestic staff to a cook, butler and dresser. Palace sources said that the Princess had little need of a driver now that she had cut down her public engagements, but one would always be available to take her to an official function.

The loss of her staff will come as an additional body-blow to a woman already reeling from the punches of impending divorce, hounding by

photographers, and a solicitor's letter from Tiggy Legge-Bourke, her estranged husband's personal assistant.

The Princess increasingly appears a lonely and isolated figure, and while Buckingham Palace indicated that it was prepared to help with the day-to-day running of her public life, she is being left to replace her private staff herself. Anyone she takes on will be paid by the Duchy of Cornwall.

An announcement is expected tomorrow that she has hired a part-time

media adviser to handle her press relations under a contract believed to be worth £35,000 a year.

The Princess's diary is much lighter than it once was, but she still has two high-profile appearances in the next two weeks: a lunch with American journalists on Monday and as guest of honour at a gala performance of *La Bohème* at the Albert Hall on February 1.

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Upbeat Clarke sees return of the 'feel-good' factor



Clarke: standing by forecast of 3 per cent growth this year

BY NICHOLAS WOON
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

KENNETH CLARKE yesterday predicted the return of the "feel-good" factor this year as he set the stage for a special Cabinet session devoted to rebuilding Conservative fortunes. In one of his most upbeat assessments of the state of the economy, the Chancellor stood by his widely criticised Budget forecast of 3 per cent growth this year.

He looked to rising consumer demand driven by tax cuts and building society windfalls to lift clouds that have descended again with the slowdown in national output in the final quarter of 1995. Addressing the British-American

Chamber of Commerce in London, Mr Clarke conceded that consumer demand had not been powering the economy over the past two years.

"This is rare for the British economy. It gives rise to all the chatter about the so-called 'feel-good' factor. Increased consumer spending should be the main source of growth in the economy as a whole this year."

Mr Clarke voiced his optimism as John Major prepared to gather his Cabinet together today for a half-day meeting that will concentrate on the need for the Government to start reaping a political dividend from the much-anticipated rise in living standards. The "political Cabinet" was called earlier this month amid renewed Tory turmoil, but the

mood of ministers has been transformed in recent days by Labour's confusion over Harriet Harman.

Mr Major boasted in the Commons yesterday that the British economy was outperforming its European neighbours. Today he will put the Cabinet on a war footing for the next election by urging his ministers to trumpet the Government's economic achievements and redouble their attacks on Labour.

He will also tell them that he wants them to use their speeches to the Conservative Central Council meeting in Harrogate in March to help him begin fleshing out a vision for a fifth consecutive term in power. Although the spring of next year remains Mr Major's preferred election date, he knows the party

must be ready to go to the country from the autumn onwards.

Even before Labour's crisis over education, Mr Major was encouraged by the impact of the Conservative counter-offensive against Tony Blair's stakeholder economy idea. He will tell his colleagues they should spend less time in their departments and more time on television and radio programmes highlighting the Government's economic achievements.

Mr Clarke said that he expected consumer demand to grow by 3½ per cent this year as it was boosted by a combination of £3 billion tax cuts, building society windfalls and maturing Tescos, electricity rebates of £54 per customer and an upturn in the housing market. Pundits

doubting his growth target "will be proved wrong".

In a Commons clash with Mr Blair yesterday, the Prime Minister accused him of "perverting" the truth for partisan purposes. The Labour leader said that the latest CBI survey showed that orders were flat while other figures showed that living standards had fallen last year for the first time in 12 years.

The Prime Minister retorted that Britain had the "lowest levels of inflation for 50 years, lowest mortgage rates for 30, lowest unemployment of any major European country, [and] the lowest basic rate of tax for over 50 years".

Fear of tomorrow, page 8
Politics, page 9

Cooling-off period will be extended

Mackay agrees to give divorcing couples more time

BY FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Lord Chancellor has agreed to extend the "cooling-off" period for divorcing couples to give them more time to make arrangements for their children and to meet criticisms from peers opposed to his reforms.

Lord Mackay of Clashfern is standing by the central provision of his Family Law Bill to allow divorce within 12 months if couples have agreed arrangements for children and property.

But in what critics see as a significant concession, Lord Mackay has agreed to give couples up to two years where they have difficulties in reaching such arrangements within the 12 months.

The change will defuse charges that the Government's divorce reforms put couples under the pressure of a tight timetable to agree on children and property which can be used by one party as a bargaining counter.

Under the Bill as drafted, couples who cannot agree on arrangements within the 12-month "cooling-off" period are given a further six months. A divorce will not be granted until this is done. If they fail after the further six months,

divorce proceedings have to be abandoned and the process must be started again.

In response to an amendment tabled by Lord Meston, Lord Mackay said: "It may well be that the period that we put forward, a total of 18 months (12, then a further six) is too short. I believe there could be some intermediate position."

The further 12 months suggested by Lord Meston seemed "an intermediate and therefore possibly attractive position". Lord Mackay said that he would consider bringing forward a government amendment at report stage to that effect.

The change will ease the pressure on couples to reach agreement on children and property within the previous time limits of 18 months' maximum.

Jonathan Evans, junior minister at the Lord Chancellor's Department, said: "The Solicitors' Family Law Association and other practitioners have argued that the six-month period in the Bill was inadequate to settle all arrangements in relation to children and property."

"We are very anxious to

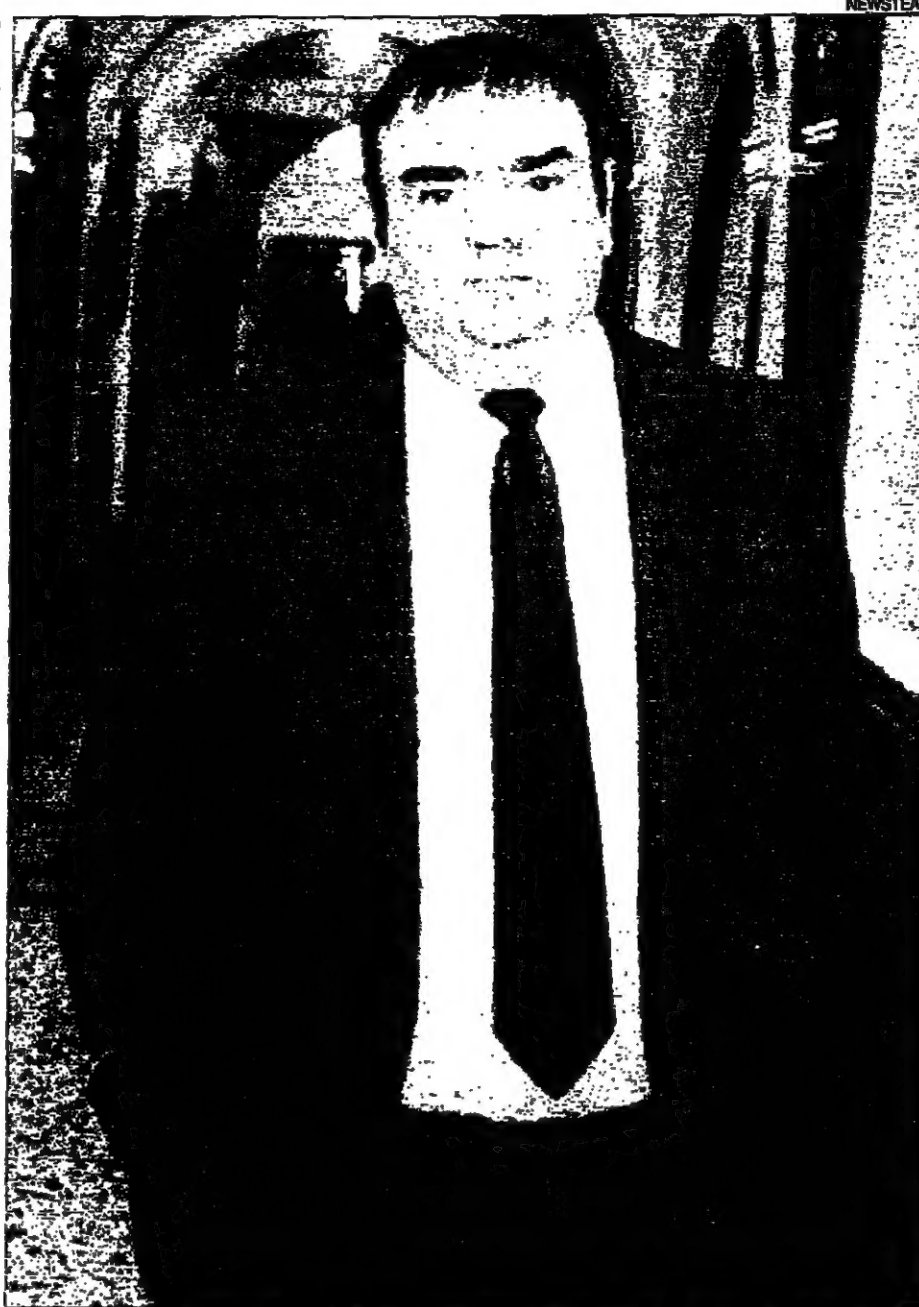
ensure that a proper period of time is put forward for these negotiations to be concluded."

Under the amendments, he added, there would be a minimum of 12 months for a divorce but a maximum of two years for arrangements to be sorted out. "I believe that is something on which there will be broad agreement and I cannot imagine that the critics of the Bill will be other than pleased."

Nigel Shepherd, chairman of the Solicitors' Family Law Association, said he was delighted with the change, which the association had recommended.

"The 18-month time scale amounted to a straitjacket which was likely to encourage people to rush into settlements, act as a bargaining chip for the more unscrupulous and would have been unachievable in many cases where there are complex issues to be resolved, particularly given the state of many county court lists."

A group of Tory peers oppose the divorce reforms, which remove the notion of fault from divorce laws, arguing that they will undermine the institution of marriage.



Tory councillors voted with Labour members to remove "Citizen Dave" Church

Walsall's Labour rebels are ousted

BY IAN MURRAY

CONSERVATIVES in Walsall have joined forces with official Labour Party councillors to oust 15 rebel leftwingers from control of the council.

A stormy meeting of the full council on Monday voted by 28 to 20 to depose "Citizen Dave" Church as leader and replace him with Ray Farrell, who heads the 19-strong official Labour Party group. John Rothery, Mr Church's deputy, was replaced by Brian John, another member of the official group, whose members will now chair all council committees. The 20-strong Conservative group was allowed a free vote and nine opted to vote against Mr Church while the rest abstained.

Mike Bird, the Tory leader, said: "It suits me to have Councillor Farrell as leader and the Labour members at each other's throats. This shows what would happen across the country if, God forbid, there should ever be a Labour government."

Before the vote Mr Church had made a vain appeal for all the 34 elected Labour councillors to vote together. He said: "Let's hold the Labour Party together and fight the common enemy."

The 15 rebels, who were backed by the five Liberal Democrats, have all been suspended by the party nationally on the grounds that they have formed a party of their own.

Prisons must cut £200m

Prisoners face a diet of cold cuts and salads after governors were urged to slash energy consumption in jail kitchens by 30 per cent as part of a £200 million cost-cutting drive. Jails are also being urged to install gas and electricity meters in their kitchens after a report found that dramatic savings could be made.

Governors have also been advised to time meetings to allow staff to use off-peak fares and avoid the necessity of overnight accommodation.

Dissident stands

Muhammad al-Masari, the Saudi dissident who is under threat of deportation, is to stand for the rectorship of the University of Glasgow. He has been nominated by the university's Liberal Democrat students' association for the honorary post.

Scene stealer

Behind the Scenes, a first novel by Kate Atkinson, has confounded the pundits to scoop the £21,000 Whitbread Book of the Year award ahead of the hot favourite, *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Salman Rushdie's first novel since *The Satanic Verses*.

TV drive-in

A motorist was fined £75 by Birmingham magistrates for watching television on a set balanced on his dashboard. Allan Wolstenholme, 44, of Swinton, Manchester, a television engineer, said the set was turned off and that the police had seen reflections.

Benefit arrests

Police believe they may have cracked a £500,000 benefit fraud ring after arresting 47 people in Operation Bomber, a series of dawn raids at addresses in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire, Birmingham, and South Yorkshire.

Boutique fined

The Versace boutique in Bond Street was described as a "death trap" and fined £4,000 for breaching fire regulations. The London Fire Brigade said that the shop's owners had refused to comply with an order to clear rubbish and to repair fire doors.

Flight of fancy

A racing pigeon that failed to return to its Dorset loft after being released in Rennes, northern France, two years ago has turned up more than 3,000 miles away in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Its owner was traced through the bird's racing tag.

10p court order

Paul Patterson, 24, of Redcar, Cleveland, who clashed with police when crossing a road at night with his fiancée, was bound over for 10p to keep the peace for 24 hours. He told Teesside magistrates that a speeding patrol car came to a halt only inches from them.

CORRECTIONS

□ Out of 674 ITN staff 183 voted for industrial action (report, yesterday); nearly 500 staff members did not vote for action or do not belong to a union.

□ A photograph published yesterday was of the three grandchildren of the late Lord Home of the Hirsel: Lord Dunsfuss, Lady Iona Douglas-Home and Lady Mary Douglas-Home

Civil servants 'must be more numerate'

BY NIGEL WILLIAMSON
WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT

SENIOR civil servants need to be more numerate, Michael Heseltine said last night, announcing reforms designed to attract a new breed of Whitehall mandarins paid at rates competitive with the private sector.

Speaking at a seminar organised by the Civil Service College, Mr Heseltine told

an audience of senior civil servants: "Far too often in my ministerial career I have been presented with 20 pages of words when one page of figures or a graph would suffice. Too many civil servants were more inclined to qualify rather than simply quantify the arguments." Mr Heseltine said. "Greater numeracy" rather than superfluous words was needed.

Mr Heseltine signalled the

continuation of the revolution in Whitehall which has created agencies and contracting out. He said that he would publish a White Paper soon that would "look forward to the day when it will become the norm for those entering the senior Civil Service to have a recognised professional qualification."

High-flying recruits from the private sector would need to be better paid than current

civil servants, Mr Heseltine said. Civil Service pay needed "greater differentiation with better rewards for those who contribute most."

He said that new, professional recruits would also be expected to adopt a more public — and potentially political — profile than civil servants in the past. "We must ensure that all senior staff are equipped to present and explain policy convincingly to a variety of outside audiences," he said.

Mr Heseltine also announced that the Government planned to introduce league tables allowing the public to compare the performance of its Next Steps agencies. The announcement follows considerable public concern over the performance of such bodies as the Child Support Agency and the Prison Service.

Granada's victory

Continued from page 1
also entitled to severance pay on his one-year service contract worth around £460,000 and holds share options with a potential profit of £430,000.

There are reports that the family may buy into another smaller group of hotels, Sir Rocco, described by staff as a workaholic usually putting in a six-day week, has expressed a wish to write a journal of the frantic last few weeks.

The future for the 270 staff at the Forte headquarters, some of whom have worked for the company for more than 20 years, is also uncertain. The staff had heard the news via one of the twice-daily bulletins which have kept them updated throughout the takeover battle.

Granada plans meetings with all levels of Forte staff over the next few days and insisted yesterday that it would not launch a jobs purge within the company in a desperate effort to cut costs. Mr Robinson said that a full review of Forte would begin in the next few days and that job

cuts would be concentrated on Forte's head office. Uncertainty also surrounds the future of many of Forte's prize assets. Granada has said that it wants to sell off upmarket hotels such as the Waldorf in London and the Exclusive and Meridien chains, along with Forte's 68 per cent stake in the Savoy group.

Granada announced that there had been interest from "half a dozen" parties. Mr Robinson also reiterated Granada's intentions to sell off Forte's chain of Welcome Break motorway service stations. But he added: "This is not a break-up. We want to retain 80 per cent of the earning capacity and by far and away the majority of the employees."

Until the plans are finalised Forte will continue to be run from its London headquarters.

Milk bar king, page 6
Diary, page 16
New-look Granada, page 25
Pennington, page 27
Repercussions and City Diary, page 29

Major savours joy at the moment of slaughter

Continued from page 1
"stakeholding" in education. Major almost trilled his reply. It was Blair's bad luck that by custom he must be next to rise.

He rose. The Government benches began laughing before he spoke. Adopting the expression of St Joan as they torched the pyre, the Labour leader cried: "We see the baying mob!"

We did. We heard them, too. Unlike Mr Blair, St Joan never had to face David Evans (C, Welwyn Hatfield) bawling: "Wat abait St Olaves? Wat

abait the Oratory?" Unlike St Joan, Mr Blair then asked about the CBI. It was not a question which met the need of the hour. The mob were beginning to enjoy themselves. Major asked Blair to accept his sympathy.

Blair said thanks for the sympathy, then snapped: "The difference between me and you is that I will not buckle under pressure," confirming a number of MPs in their doubts about his suitability for Number 10. You could see the smirking Tory front bench tucking that remark into their

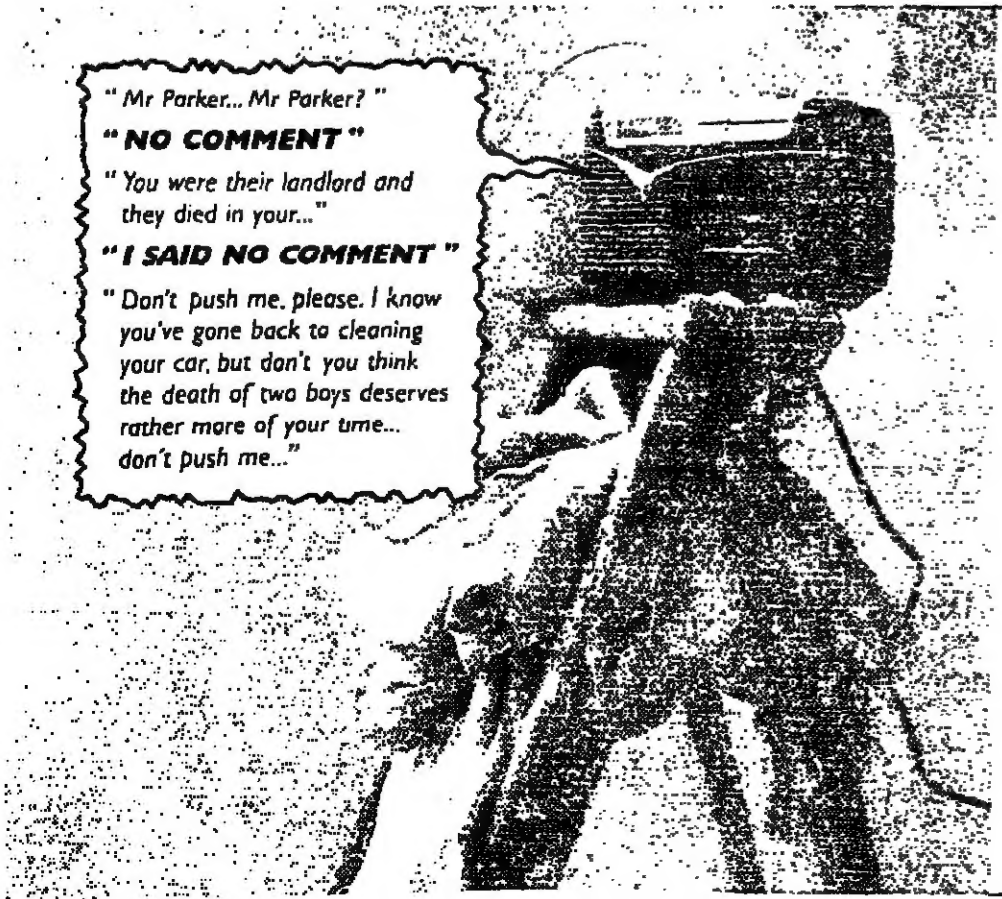
mental files, for future use. John Prescott's face turned a darker shade of ebony.

"Smile, John," shouted the Tories. Prescott's lip twitched very slightly, as though a spider were trying to get out. "Wat abait the grammar schools?" belittled Evans, the first recorded occasion when grammar and Mr Evans have shared a sentence.

Douglas French (C, Gloucester) pitched in with a faintly unsavoury question about black legs-men. Frightful in victory, and frightful in

defeat, the Tory Party at least concentrate in defeat on being frightful to each other. In victory they start being frightful to everyone else. Major accepted Mr French's offering rather as one accepts a partially disembowelled mouse on the doorstep from the cat.

But then Mr Major is not a Tory. This represents his one hope of winning the next election. Tony Blair is, and won't "buckle under pressure". This represents Labour's greatest



"Mr Parker... Mr Parker?"
"NO COMMENT"
"You were their landlord and they died in your..."
"I SAID NO COMMENT"
"Don't push me, please. I know you've gone back to cleaning your car, but don't you think the death of two boys deserves rather more of your time... don't push me..."

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Or NEWS IN BRIEF
Prisons must cut £200m

Toytown will become small-scale answer to Disneyland in copyright deal worth £13m

Enid Blyton's family sells Noddy and Big Ears

BY DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE family of Enid Blyton, whose centenary falls next year, has sold the copyright to her books for £13 million.

The rights to classics such as *Noddy* and *The Famous Five* have been acquired by Trocadero plc, co-owners of the Trocadero entertainment centre in central London. A marketing drive aims to catapult some of her most famous characters to international stardom, with Toytown offering Britain's answer to the merchandising power of Disney.

Children will be able to meet Noddy and shake hands with Big Ears at the Trocadero, before persuading their parents to buy them Blyton clothes, wallpaper, confectionery, computer games and much more. Film and television programmes are also in the pipeline.

Enid Blyton would have approved. In the 1950s, she was already overseeing a mass of Noddy items, everything from toys and torches to slippers and dressing-gowns.

Merchandising and spin-offs are a goldmine for companies that own the copyright to children's books, cartoons and films. *Tin-Tin* and *Batman* are among dozens of children's favourites which have generated a wealth of ideas and profits for those



Enid Blyton, left, did not like children to make any noise while she wrote her Famous Five adventures



THE FAMOUS FIVE

creating them. The merchandise produced after the 1989 *Batman* movie has brought in some £500 million.

The *Thomas the Tank Engine* industry is also vast, creating a £1 billion worldwide market for its licenses. There is a bedroom collection, children's clothing, toothbrushes and mugs.

There is no end to the merchandising ideas in a business which Disney is said to have invented.

Long since it came up with Mickey Mouse watches in the 1930s, Disney offers moccasins, headresses, pillowcases and pencil cases for *Pocahontas* and *The Lion King*, selling them through their stores worldwide. The Blyton ven-

ture will be part of the £45 million Trocadero centre, which is being renovated for a summer opening as an indoor theme park. The family will retain editorial control with Gillian Baverstock, Blyton's eldest daughter, becoming a director.

Blyton has recently enjoyed a revival of interest, as criticism of her stories as sexist, racist and politically incorrect has waned. There was, example, concern that *Big Ears* would affect people with physical abnormalities and that he should be renamed White Bear.

The copyright package had been expected to fetch about £10 million, but it was virtually impossible to set an esti-

mate for an author whose books sell more than eight million annually worldwide. The sale includes copyright for more than 700 of Blyton's books and some 10,000 short stories.

Ms Baverstock, who closely resembles her mother and who is organising celebrations for the 1947 centenary, emphasised that the storylines and characters in Trocadero products would remain "as my mother wrote them".

Like her mother, Ms Baverstock was a teacher. Whenever she was faced with a poor reader in her class, she used to bring in her mother's books. "Within a couple of terms, I could get them up to standard. They were excellent for remedial reading, because the children wanted to continue reading."

Enid Blyton learnt the art of telling stories to children and gauged their concentration spans and vocabulary levels during her seven years as a teacher.

Ms Baverstock said yesterday that she did not recognise the portrait of her mother painted by Blyton's youngest daughter, Imogen.

In 1980 Imogen disclosed that her mother was unable to tell the difference between her servants and her children and that while writing books she resented her children making a noise. Blyton, who died in 1968, once told her agent that



Gillian Baverstock, Blyton's daughter, with a Noddy lookalike. The Blyton family will retain editorial control

her books were her children.

"My relationship with my mother was very different from Imogen's," Ms Baverstock recalled. "I didn't notice when we were children that she viewed her any differently. Maybe she always hid it. As a young child, I had a very close and happy relationship with my mother."

"A writer needs time and

space to write and my mother

was no exception. She didn't want to be interrupted by children running in all day long, demanding drinks." She added that like most middle-class children, she had a nanny. "But in the 1930s, most families I knew did." Her mother told her stories every night, stories she had written. Often, she would sing, partic-

ularly old folk songs, and they

played games together. Ms Baverstock has fought off political correctness, though she conceded that Gollifrog was inappropriate for a multi-cultural society. She said: "There was nothing racist about it. It was once a toy in an English nursery, just like a teddy bear." She lamented the passing of an innocent world,

a world untainted by adults.

Norman Wright, a founder of the Enid Blyton literary society, welcomed the news as long as Ms Baverstock retained control. He expressed concern that once copyright was acquired, new stories could be ghost-written.

Leading article, page 17
Tempus, page 28

Scarborough set fair with £10m bequest

BY BILL FROST

A BUSINESSMAN who died last November has left nearly £10 million to be spent on worthy causes in Scarborough, the North Yorkshire seaside town he loved. One of Eric Plaxton's only stipulations was that a new lifeboat should be bought, and maintained at an estimated cost of £1.25 million.

The boat will be named after his father Frederick, who founded the family coach building business in 1906. Mr Plaxton always loved the sea and the lifeboat service. He was said to admire the crews for their courage.

The family business was in construction and later in bus and coach building. It boomed both before and after the war until the coach building recession. Eric Plaxton was a director of that firm and later a director of Plaxton's Building Services which employed about 100 staff.

When keen pricing and increasing competition forced the company into financial difficulties last June, he put £325,000 of his own money into the firm to try to save it.

The effort was not successful, even though the company was noted for its high building standards.

Mr Plaxton also left £10,000 to his gardener and long-time friend, Maurice Mason. Two other local people are also to receive legacies under the terms of the will.

However, the balance, an estimated £8 million, will go to "charitable causes" in Scarborough (population 53,000). A list is being drawn up by two of Mr Plaxton's friends — John Parkinson, who works for a law firm in the town, and John Oates, a local accountant. They have been granted probate and will have to decide which charities will benefit.

"There is no shortage of good causes here," said Mr Parkinson last night. "It will be our responsibility to decide which are the most worthy."

Mr Parkinson fully expected considerable interest in the bequest from a number of different organisations.

"I wouldn't be surprised if there wasn't quite a large post from now on," he said. "But

these are early days. We haven't even begun to consider who the money might go to, so don't ask me."

Mr Plaxton, 75 when he died, never married, nor did his late elder sister Gladys. The pair used to take ocean cruises together.

He lived not far from Scarborough South Cliff golf club, playing there for 30 years with a handicap that ranged from 10 to 12. He was also a keen snooker player and he enjoyed the occasional rubber of bridge.

His friends described him as an unassuming man of simple tastes who had a good sense of humour. He was said to be "shy, but well liked".

Mr Plaxton also took a paternal interest in his staff. When the family firm, which employed about 100 staff, was in financial difficulties last June he ploughed £325,000 of his own money in a failed rescue attempt.

The coach-body building firm of Plaxtons became part of the Henley group eight years ago and is still in business.

Stammerer shot himself

THE family of a graduate who shot himself because of his stammer launched a campaign yesterday to raise awareness of the plight of those with speech impediments.

Dominic Barker, 26, who had a master's degree in agricultural economics, killed himself 15 months ago after spending a year unsuccessfully seeking a job. He blamed his failure at interviews on his

stammer. His parents, Alan and Helen Barker, of Holbrook, Suffolk, and his grandfather, Leslie King, of Felixstowe, yesterday appeared on Esther Rantzen's BBC2 programme *Esther* to talk about Dominic's death.

Mr King said: "Almost everyone knows somebody who stammers. To the person involved, a stammer can be the most terrible thing in their life." When he wrote to Esther

Rantzen, "she phoned me back and said she was very interested because her husband, Desmond Wilcox, had been a stammerer."

Mr Barker's mother said the family had had no idea that her son's stammer was causing him so much unhappiness. "The full extent only became apparent from what he had told his girlfriend and his speech therapist. He must have been very distressed."

Ex-judge tells of gory last request

BY TIM JONES

A FORMER Old Bailey judge described yesterday how his father, who had a horror of being buried alive, ordered him and his brothers to make sure he was dead by plunging a long knife into his body.

Judge Michael Argyle, who presided over the Oz obscenity trial of the early 1970s, said another distant relative had insisted his heart be removed before burial. Mr Argyle, QC, said his father's fears stemmed from his experience in both world wars.

In a letter to his local newspaper Mr Argyle, 81, said: "Throughout both wars he saw a lot of action and had a horror, based on his experience, of being buried alive." Yesterday, Mr Argyle said: "My father died peacefully in a nursing home without us present so his wishes were never put to the test. I do not

know whether we would have carried them out. Fortunately, it is a hypothetical question."

He said he did not share his father's fears. "My wish is to die suddenly and without warning as I am sipping a large whisky," he said. Mr Argyle said his father had been haunted by the thought of dying slowly in the grave after an incident in which he saw a coffin reopened to reveal the corpse's torn nails, blood-stained fingers and scratch marks on the coffin lid.

Mr Argyle made his comments after the case of Daphne Banks, who was certified dead by a doctor but who was found to be alive in the hospital mortuary. He said he was attracted by the idea of the Irish wake when bodies were laid in open coffins for a few days "while relatives pay their respects and enjoy a drink".

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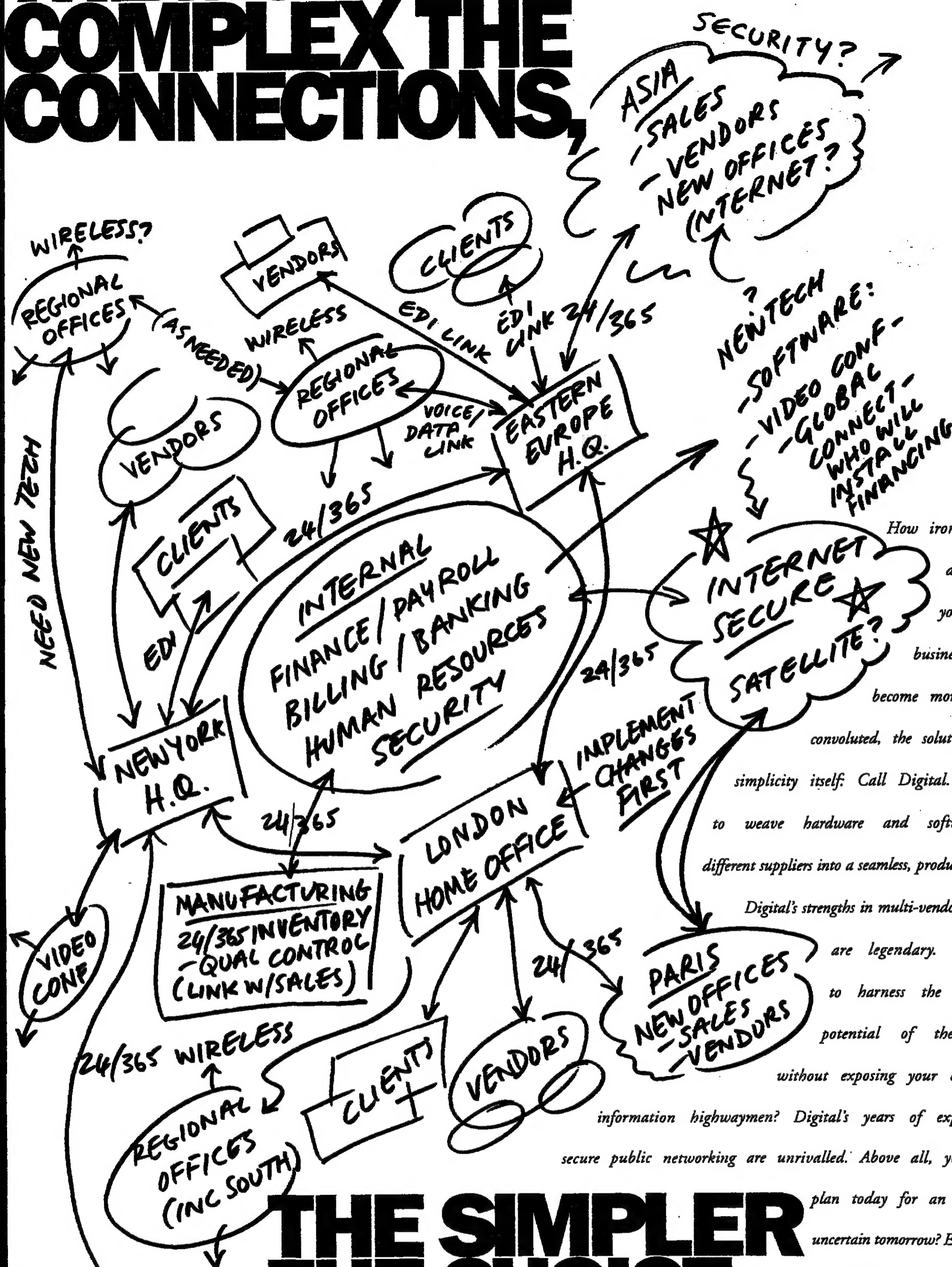
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WHATEVER IT TAKES

Priest questioned by police after arrest of teenager who met his sweetheart on summer holiday

Turks charge waiter with rape of schoolgirl bride

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

A TURKISH waiter who "married" a 13-year-old British girl was charged with rape and holding her by force yesterday, Musa Komeagae, 18, was detained in custody overnight and will appear before a judge today.

Police at Kahramanmaraş in southeast Turkey were also questioning the priest who conducted the marriage service, which is not valid in Turkish law. Sarah Cook, from Braintree, Essex, is understood to have had a medical examination by a police doctor after accompanying her husband to the public prosecutor's office. Trudi Pak, the British vice-consul in Ankara, is flying to see her today.

Mrs Pak, who spoke to Sarah by telephone several times yesterday, said the teenager had become upset. "When I spoke to her earlier she sounded fine, but the last time we spoke she had talked to her mother and it had distressed her," she said.

It seems likely that Sarah, who is on a tourist visa, will have to return to Britain where it is understood she will become the subject of immediate care proceedings. Sarah's parents were questioned for two hours by social workers yesterday and last night flew to Turkey. Adrian and Jackie Cook say they were deceived over the girl's relationship with the young Turk whom

THE TURKISH VIEW

Turkey is not sure what to make of this star-crossed couple and the attention they are attracting abroad, although clearly there is some sympathy for the way they have been pursued (Andrew Finkel in Istanbul writes).

"Two children share a grown-up love" was the headline in the daily newspaper *Sabah*. Mr Komeagae faces between six months and three years in prison for violating a minor. Had Miss Cook been Turkish the case might not have gone to court, given the fact that her parents approve of the match. Even so, there have been recent controversial cases of girls having to endure virginity tests, with women's groups protesting against the indignity.

While some Turkish girls do undergo a traditional marriage at a young age, it is a dying practice of remote rural areas. What Turks find so bizarre about this case is that it is a Westerner from Essex who appears to have embraced what they see as archaic dress and behaviour.

she met at the age of 12 while with her parents in Antalya, southern Turkey, during their summer holiday.

The Foreign Office said: "Sarah understands she may need to return to the UK because of the charges that have been laid. She was present with him at the prosecutor's office but was not interviewed. She has returned to his family for the time being. Sarah's interest is of paramount importance to us. Our concern is for her welfare."

A lawyer for the unemployed waiter said his client would apply to have the case heard at a higher court. He will claim the girl consented to the relationship. Under Turk-

ish law, a woman has to be at least 15 to be able to wed legally with parental consent. Men can marry at 17. Sex with anyone under 15 is illegal even if it is with consent.

Selim Surmen, Mr Komeagae's lawyer, said: "Sarah has said she will love Musa until death. There is no force used in this relationship. We'll appeal for his release."

He faces a maximum penalty of three years in prison and the Turkish authorities could also order Sarah to return to Britain. The Turkish Embassy said: "She is a British tourist visiting Turkey with her parents. Her visa allows Sarah to stay in our country for up to 90 days."

Mr Cook, 42, a welder, and

his wife, who gave the union their blessing and attended a marriage ceremony, emerged grim-faced from their meeting with social workers and resolutely refused to comment.

But earlier, on hearing of developments in Turkey, Mrs Cook, 39, said tearfully: "Oh my God! Poor Sarah! They are not allowed to examine her without my permission. Poor Musa! They can't put him in jail. I haven't lost a daughter. I have gained a fabulous son-in-law. Now this has happened."

Mrs Cook defended the decision to allow her daughter to marry and said the relationship was neither illegal nor immoral. "The question of marriage was a bit of a shock at first and allowing it to go ahead was a big decision. We said yes because she was so... not headstrong, but she decided that this was what she wanted."

Before the arrest of her husband, Sarah said: "I've treated better here than in England. I love him more than words can say. He is the sweetest man I have ever seen." She told her parents: "Thank you for being the sweetest people I have ever seen and for going through all this. I love you."

At her semi-detached home, a former council house close to the school where she was in her third year, Sarah has turned her bedroom into a shrine to Musa. In left-hand pen on the white wardrobe, she



Musa Komeagae with Sarah Cook before he was arrested for allegedly holding the schoolgirl against her will

has written "I love Musa" and on the wall are the words "Musa is the man for me."

Her devotion, however, has bemused and angered social workers. Colin Davis, Essex County Council's spokesman, said: "Sarah and her parents both categorically denied there was a sexual relation-

ship when we spoke to them in December before the marriage, not least, they said, because of the man's religion. He is a Muslim. We did not know about the marriage until we read about it in the papers."

Sarah failed to return to Tabor High School after half-

term last November and education welfare officers called in social workers. They were told by Mr and Mrs Cook that she was being looked after in local parents by Mr Komeagae's parents.

Sarah returned for Christmas before flying out again on December 27. Mr Davis said:

"Our understanding was that she was going on a temporary basis to stay in Turkey. The parents had given their consent. She has not been in our care. If she were in this country, there would be a number of options. It could be a question of care proceedings."

Beck's victims accuse council of negligence

By A STAFF REPORTER

FRANK BECK, the former social worker jailed for child abuse, used a therapy on children in care that was "unsubstantiated and psycho-babble", a court was told yesterday.

Seven men and women are suing, Leicestershire County Council, Beck's employer between 1973 and 1986, claiming that they suffered abuse at his hands as a result of the authority's negligence. The council contests the action.

Richard Maxwell, QC, for the seven, told the High Court, sitting in Nottingham, that Beck was allowed to continue a "bogus" treatment, known as regression therapy. It involved caring for the children as if they were infants. They were made to wear nappies, drink from feeder bottles and had to have close physical contacts with staff, particularly before they went to bed every night.

But Mr Maxwell called the therapy a "form of torture" and a "mindbending treatment". He said: "These children went into the homes with a history of some disturbance

but they were not hopeless cases and given some proper, reasonable treatment, they could have done better, much better than they did."

In one of the three homes in Leicestershire that Beck ran he used a television room as a "punishment" centre. Children were terrified of being taken into the room, the court was told.

Mr Maxwell said that children in the homes were "physically, sexually and psychologically humiliated and violated and manipulated."

"We say the defendants chose not to inquire too deeply into Beck's conduct. That was deliberately done, probably because they were fearful of Beck and probably because he was very useful for them. It enabled them to deal with the children, tidily disposing of them in this way."

In a reference for Beck in 1977 when he applied to attend a course in York, the director of the county's social services department had even described him as "greatly respected by his staff". The hearing continues.

'Wee Free' churchman to face sex trial

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

ONE of Scotland's leading fundamentalist churchmen has failed in his attempt to have six charges of sexual assault, involving five women, dropped.

Professor Donald Macleod, 55, of the Free Church of Scotland, will now face a trial in April. The case has shocked and deeply divided the Free Church, whose members are known colloquially as "the Wee Frees".

The charges relate to six incidents said to have taken place between 1985 and 1992. Professor Macleod alleged to have attempted to kiss four women and unbelted the blouse of another before fondling her breasts.

Yesterday, in Edinburgh's Sheriff Court, Sheriff Iain Macphail rejected a submission by Andrew Hardie, QC, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, that the charges against Professor Macleod should be dropped because some of the alleged incidents were said to have taken place more than ten years ago.

What the doctor won't tell you about migraine cure

ONE person in ten in Britain suffers from migraine, which is three times more common in women as in men. Another drug, Midrid, has now been made available without a doctor's prescription.

Midrid has been used for many years and is much better tolerated than ergotamine preparations, and even if it is not any more effective in relieving the headaches than ergotamine it is much better at banishing the nausea and vomiting.

Migraine occurs when the blood vessels supplying the brain become abnormally dilated. Any treatment that is effective is designed to constrict the blood vessels and thereby relieve the headache caused by their congestion.

An attack can be triggered by an increase in stress, although surprisingly the symptoms in some people coincide with relaxation of the excessive tension, rather than happening when it is at its



MEDICAL BRIEFING

Dr Thomas Stuttaford

height. Migraine can be induced by certain foods but the most common aspect of diet that triggers an attack is starvation: patients liable to migraine should eat regularly and thereby maintain a regular blood sugar level.

Some foods are notorious for stimulating headaches. These include alcohol and the simple role is that the darker the alcoholic drink the more likely it is to cause migraine and a hangover.

Women often notice that whatever the trigger that stimulates their migraine it is usually worse just before a period. In general it can be

said that anything that will bring about a headache will also precipitate a migraine in a susceptible person.

Two types of migraine are usually described. In common migraine the severe headache is accompanied by nausea, with or without vomiting, and photophobia. In classic migraine the headaches and other symptoms are preceded by an aura, flashing lights before the eyes, partial loss of vision or a loss of sensation in various parts of the body. In both types of migraine the patient may notice that before the migraine attack started they felt particularly jolly and well.

Severe or persistent migraine is not something that should be tolerated without a visit to a doctor but the occasional sufferer may well find that a couple of capsules of Midrid will be all that they need. Their doctor won't tell them but experience has shown that Midrid has another use. It is quite effective in relieving the headache of the hangover.

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Commuters take the strain as trains are cut over safety fears

By Jonathan Prynn
The Sunday Correspondent

BRITISH RAIL was yesterday forced to withdraw nearly 100 London commuter trains suspected of having metal fatigue, forcing tens of thousands of passengers to crush into half the normal number of carriages.

Some of the trains, all modern and British-built, have cracks in the couplings that hold the carriages together. Tests are being carried out on the others in the fleet of 97. Drivers refused yesterday morning to take out any of the trains, which are operated by the South Eastern BR subsidiary, and safety inspectors said they could not be used again until they had been thoroughly checked.

South Eastern was criticised by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for not informing inspectors that it planned to continue running the trains with interconnecting carriage doors locked. Lew Adams, the general secretary

Yesterday's scare came as Railtrack presented its latest set of audited figures before its flotation in May, insisting that safety had never been better. A £98 million pre-tax profit in the six months up to September 1995 compared with £189 million in the year to March 1995. Results, page 26

of Aslef, the train drivers' union, said: "We are supporting the drivers because we believe that the units are unsafe. If it had been anything other than the railway industry all these trains would have been grounded."

The HSE said the suspect trains could not be used because of the risk that a carriage could become detached in the event of a coupling snapping.

The 388 affected carriages were made by ABB of York, which has denied liability. They were delivered to South

Eastern between 1992 and last year. South Eastern warned commuters it would be able to provide, at best, only a Saturday service. There were no trains all day between Dartford and Victoria, Tunbridge Wells and Victoria and on the Orpington to London Bridge line.

Passengers who were able to get on trains complained of sardine-like conditions with passengers at some stations unable to squeeze into packed carriages.

A project to encourage 400,000 lorries a year off the road and on to freight trains, riding "piggyback", has hit a problem — the railway bridges on the proposed line are too low. Railtrack is to commission a study into how the bridges can be raised, or the track lowered, for the project planned by the Piggyback Consortium, a partnership of 40 local authorities, ferry operators and freight companies, including Euro-tunnel and SNCF, the French railway system.



Miklos Baumgartner speaking yesterday about the letters of support he had received

Relief of man in clear over killing

By Adrian Lee

A BUSINESSMAN spoke yesterday of his relief at learning that he was not to be prosecuted over the death of an intruder in a struggle at his home.

Miklos Baumgartner could still face a private prosecution or a civil claim for damages from the family of the dead man, Robert Ingham, 22, but a private prosecution is likely to succeed only if new evidence comes to light.

Mr Baumgartner, 54, suffered a broken wrist in the fight and still had his arm in a sling as he and his solicitor gave their reactions yesterday to the Crown Prosecution Service's decision.

Mr Baumgartner, whose company builds tennis courts, was "very relieved" that he would not be prosecuted. He said he had received 250 letters of support: "Letters that have been sent from around the world. Every one has touched my heart."

Mr Baumgartner may be called to give evidence at Mr Ingham's inquest.

A soap opera fan writes...



"This cock-up at the Opera House certainly proves one thing: that nothing was contrived to impress the cameras. Nobody would plan this."

Lynne Truss reviews The House on the Television page

Plus: today's television, radio, satellite and cable; the most comprehensive listing of ITV regional variations and the pick of the day's programmes

Television, Section 2, Page 47

Boxer meets his match in 6ft PC

By Bill Frost

PRINCE Naseem Hamed, the WBO featherweight champion, came off second best in an unscheduled confrontation with a 6ft police constable yesterday.

The boxer was put in his place by the officer after reducing Helen Russell, a British Airways clerk, to tears as he checked in at Manchester Airport for a flight to Heathrow.

The fighter had tried to take two pieces of hand luggage onto the aircraft. He was told by Miss Russell that only one was permitted and that one of his bags was too heavy for cabin luggage anyway. "I told

him the weight limit was 20kg and he said if his bag didn't get where it was supposed to be he would come back and find me," Miss Russell claimed. "No one has ever said that to me before and I have been working here for nine years."

Hamed then allegedly failed to answer standard security questions about his luggage and Miss Russell contacted her supervisor, who confiscated the boxer's ticket and boarding card. He warned Hamed that he might not be allowed to travel and called police.

Hamed was warned about his conduct by the constable, the tallest that could be found in the airport. After apologising to Miss Russell and other BA staff, the boxer was given his ticket back and allowed to join the flight to Heathrow. Dec Varnam, who saw the incident, said: "Prince Naseem's attitude changed completely after he was spoken to by the policeman, who was smashing."

Ann-Marie Hudson, of the promoter Frank Warren's Sports Network, which manages Hamed, said: "He only realised later that she didn't share his sense of humour. He apologised. It was something that was blown out of all proportion."



Prince Naseem said sorry to BA staff

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Fear of tomorrow turns Britons into savers and gamblers

BY LEYLA LINTON AND RUSSELL JENKINS

BRITONS are cutting their spending, clearing their debts and putting their spare cash in the bank. Their only indulgence is a weekly flutter on the National Lottery as they wait for better times to come, according to a survey published today.

The latest Mintel lifestyles report shows that the country is still unsettled by falling house prices, negative equity and a lack of job security. It also confirms that Britain is now a nation of gamblers.

Gambling is the fastest-growing sector of consumer spending with the lottery help-

ing to account for a 42 per cent increase last year. More than 90 per cent of people now gamble routinely, compared with only 68 per cent a decade ago.

Emma Bresbode, the survey's project manager, said: "The recession and the introduction of the National Lottery has been a factor in encouraging consumers to gamble more." She said the least well off were most likely to splash out a disproportionate amount of their earnings.

More than a third of people questioned said playing the lottery added excitement to

their Saturday nights, while only 18 per cent believed that the odds were far too steep to bother playing.

People are also saving more. Where once consumers saved for a specific purpose — such as buying a house, car or a holiday — they are now saving for its own sake, amassing piles of cash. "Manufacturers, retailers and other service providers will have to come to terms with the emergence of a New Consumer," says the report.

First-time buyers are reluctant to enter the housing market and young people between the ages of 20 and 34 are less likely to agree that buying a home is a good financial investment. Spending on insurance and pensions has increased by 2.4 per cent over the past decade and Mintel predicts that this trend will continue to increase up until 2000, as will spending on medical and education fees.

Health concerns have led to an increase in the number of people going to leisure centres. Almost twice as many go more than once a week, compared with 1991, but this still amounts to just 11 per cent of the population.

Despite the publicity surrounding the Internet, there has been no significant increase in the number of people who say they are very interested in new technology.

The traditional family meal stages a comeback

BY LEYLA LINTON AND RUSSELL JENKINS

FAMILIES are increasingly making the effort to have at least one meal together, according to the Mintel survey. Mothers, especially, are leading the trend towards more traditional mealtimes.

For decades meals have been increasingly consumed from chairs or sofas in front of the television.

The survey shows that 42 per cent now believe it is important to have one meal together each day, an increase of 4 per cent on last

year. More than half of all adults have their main meals at table on most occasions, compared with 38 per cent who usually watch television.

There has also been a return to traditional cooked meals, although convenience foods are preferred. The tendency to eat less fresh meat rose from 20 per cent in 1994 to 24 per cent last year. Fresh fish is also on the decline.

In the past five years spending on confectionery rose by 27 per cent.



The singer Lynsey de Paul and the actress Pam Ferris sit in a veal crate at the launch of the campaign to end this method of rearing calves

Scrap veal crates now, say pressure groups

BY MICHAEL HORNSBY
AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

ANIMAL welfare pressure groups started a Europe-wide campaign yesterday for an early ban on the "cruel and unnecessary suffering" of calves raised in veal crates.

Britain outlawed veal crates five years ago, but thousands of farmers in other European Union countries still use them to meet the big demand on the Continent for the pale meat that this rearing method alone can produce. The calves are taken from their mothers soon after birth and kept until

slaughter at six months in narrow pens in semi-darkness. Every year Britain exports about 500,000 calves to the rest of the EU. Most end up in veal crates in Holland and France, and some of the meat produced is sent back, legally, to this country for sale in shops and restaurants.

The EU's scientific veterinary committee condemned veal crates in a report last November, and the European Commission in Brussels is expected today to announce proposals to phase them out over 12 years from 1998. But animal welfare groups want the timetable accelerated. Ron Kirkby,

council chairman of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said: "To wait 12 years for calves to get a better deal is not acceptable to the RSPCA or any other animal welfare organisation. There is no reason why crates should not be banned before the end of the century."

At a ceremony in London, Pam Ferris, star of the television series *The Darling Buds of May*, Lynsey de Paul, the singer, and Elliot Morley, the Labour Party's spokesman on animal welfare, joined Mr Kirkby in lighting a giant candle to mark the start of the campaign. Similar candles were lit at

many of the RSPCA's 200 branches in England and Wales and in the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The campaign is being organised in Europe by the World Society for the Protection of Animals, which has 340 member societies (220 of them in Europe) in 70 countries.

Carol McKenna, its campaigns coordinator, said: "Veal became a dirty word in the UK when the public learnt of the misery of calves kept in crates. If the Council of Ministers fails to introduce a ban, our campaign will make sure that veal becomes a dirty word across Europe too."

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Newbury protection cost soars

BY ADRIAN LEE

THE cost to the taxpayer of hiring hundreds of guards to protect workers on the Newbury bypass will be much higher than expected.

The Highways Agency said yesterday that the weekly bill for private security was about £50,000 and the total would exceed the £500,000 allocated by at least £200,000, and possibly by £500,000. "Unfortunately there will be an extra burden on the taxpayer," a spokeswoman said.

The number of guards on site has risen from 250 to more than 500 and more are due to join their ranks in the next few days. Although they heavily outnumber protesters, the guards have struggled to prevent determined efforts to stop work along the 8½-mile route.

Police were called to a brawl on Monday night among about 20 of the guards, employed by Reliance Security. There were no arrests.

Villagers offer up tax to save peace

BY A STAFF REPORTER

VILLAGERS in Kent have volunteered to increase their tax bills by up to £40 a year to oppose a roadside service area that would include a 400-bedroom hotel, a McDonald's drive-through restaurant and a service station.

The development planned for the North Downs, south of Canterbury, has been rejected by Canterbury City Council but will go to a public inquiry later this year. Kingston parish council will pay for a barrister to put its case by increasing its share of the council tax from £1,200 a year to £6,200. All 130 villagers who attended a public meeting approved of the rise.

This will mean an average increase of £25 each for the 200 residents and up to £40 for those in the highest tax bands.

The legal bill is expected to be at least £15,000. The rest of the money will come from

fundraising events. The 24-hour stopover planned by the developer, Reunion Holdings, would employ up to 700 people and includes a Texaco garage, heavy goods vehicle depot and tyre bay, and a caravan park.

Objectors say that the development would mar one of Kent's most beautiful landscapes. Five other villages are affected. The area is split in two by the A2 London to Dover road, but since the opening of the Channel Tunnel and improved motorway connections traffic has decreased.

John Gilby, 54, of the Barham Downs Action Group, said: "We can accept the dual carriageway, but this McDonald's is a step too far. The service station would be just a short drive to either Dover or Canterbury, where there are ample garages and restaurants."

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Threat of old guard defines Blair's need for Lib Dem support

Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown could happily co-operate in government, whether in coalition or in the latest vogue term, partnership. But would their parties be so willing? That question is raised as much by Labour's turmoil over Harriet Harman as it is by Mr Ashdown's kite-flying on Monday.

The Harman affair is no longer about the future education of an 11-year-old, if it ever was. Nor is it even really about the future of Ms Harman, though she faces a stern test of her political character at this morning's meeting of the parlia-

mentary party and, later, during the Commons health debate. It is about Mr Blair's attempt to turn Labour into a new party. His authority is now being challenged by the forces of "old" Labour which have been largely dormant during his 18-month leadership. Ms Harman's vulnerability has provided a way of attacking the whole "new" Labour strategy. If she is forced to resign, despite the leader's support, it would be a big defeat for the Blair camp.

Labour will suffer far more with the public if it appears to be compromising over parental

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

choice. Mr Blair and Ms Harman are more in tune with the public over education than are "old" Labour defenders of the comprehensive system. The real danger to Labour is not over her decision but over the appearance of disunity. Mr Blair had his toughest Prime Minister's questions so far yesterday as John Major exploited the opposition's discomfiture. The Tories' gloating, and some usual loutish jeering by the yobish

David Evans, was partly relief that at last they had a chance to counter-attack. But the shrewder Tories know it may not last. For the moment, Mr Blair has no choice but to ride out the row.

For him, far more ominous was the extent and speed of the breakdown of discipline among Labour MPs and spokesmen. Loyalty and standing by a colleague under pressure were soon forgotten. If it is like this in opposition, what might it be like in government when Labour MPs would face far more serious tests over public spending, welfare reform

and Europe? It is precisely this worry that lies behind Mr Blair's desire for a broad base of political support in government, even if Labour wins an overall majority. Even though Mr Blair is confident that many of the new MPs elected next time will be his allies, he wants to reach beyond Labour. He has said he wants to lead a government that represents two thirds of the British people. That implies an understanding, if not a deal, with the Liberal Democrats.

Hence, the significance of Mr Ashdown's Monday lecture was not so much what he said, but Mr

Blair's broad welcome for working together. His Labour predecessors would have been hostile, if not dismissive. Of course, there are many hurdles, not least over electoral change at Westminster, and both leaders tread carefully to avoid internal party rows. Mr Blair has stressed that any co-operation would have to be on Labour's terms. But Mr Ashdown's view of politics is similar to his own with its emphasis on an agreed agenda for a reforming government "robust enough to survive for at least two Parliaments", involving a partner-

ship between parties, extensive constitutional reform and a priority for education, welfare reform and a positive role in Europe. However, as Monday's leak of an internal Liberal Democrat staff analysis showed, the party is vulnerable in several areas where its policies are much fuzzier than Mr Ashdown's proposals. Just as many Labour MPs are still not converted to Blairism, so many Liberal Democrats have yet to face up to the hard choices involved in the politics of partnership.

PETER RIDDELL

National party 'at odds with local councils'

Grammar schools fear Labour will finish them off

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

GRAMMAR schools fear that local authorities will try to pick them off under a Labour government, despite the national party's assurances that parents will have the final say.

The Tories' poor showing in local elections has left many of the surviving 161 grammar schools in a stand-off with councils led by both Labour and Liberal Democrat members who oppose selection.

Nowhere is the uneasy truce more tense than in the Manchester borough of Trafford, where the minority Labour council has made it clear that it wants to turn the area's four grammar schools into comprehensives.

Bryan Purvis, head teacher of Altrincham Grammar School for Boys, which is in Trafford borough, said he was confident that the school would survive, having fought off one closure and one merger threat in the 1980s. It opted out of council control on January 1.

Mr Purvis said: "The local Labour group has made its

views fairly plain but we have quite a track record of defending our grammar schools here. I cannot imagine a local ballot here being in favour of abolishing them. But there seems to be some inconsistency in the attitude of the local authority and the national party."

The private fear of the National Grammar Schools' Association is that local Labour councils may not be willing to keep selective schools even if parents say they want them.

Dave Acton, the Labour education chairman, said that the council would take notice of parents' views. "We are opposed to selection and once we get a Labour government we would want to put a plan together to phase out selection. We do not mind what the schools are called—they could retain the name grammar. What we are concerned about is that no child should be excluded from any school by means of examining or interview. Prior to doing that we

would want to consult with parents, and we would need the Secretary of State's approval."

The changing colour of local government since 1993 has brought other rifts between councils and grammar schools and helps to explain why more than 100 have opted for grant-maintained status. Opting out removes a local authority's control over admissions to the school.

However, this has not stopped former Tory councils from making trouble for grant-maintained selective schools. Essex, now run by Labour with the Liberal Democrats, has withdrawn its subsidy from children using buses to travel to a grammar school. Lincolnshire County Council refused to run the 11-plus testing system for grammar school entry and the schools now administer it themselves.

The National Grammar Schools' Association expects a series of battles against councils and is taking legal advice on defending its members, although it took heart from a Harris poll this week which showed that 54 per cent of parents wanted a return to the 11-plus.

The safest place for a selective school is probably Buckinghamshire, the last remaining Conservative shire county, which has 14 grammar schools. The main concentration is in Kent, which has 43 grammar schools, followed by Lincolnshire, which has 17. There are six in Birmingham, six in Gloucestershire, five in Essex and four in Lancashire.

Head teachers say that Labour policy raises as many questions as it answers. Martyn Morris, head of Bacup and Rawenshall Grammar in Waterfoot, Lancashire, said: "Five hundred youngsters apply to come to this school and we can take 150. If they say we are not allowed to select, how are we going to choose between those 350? If they go for a small circle catchment area around the school, it will have significant social repercussions because you are not going to get the mix of students unless the housing is mixed."

Simon Jenkins, page 16
Letters, page 17



Gilmour accuses Tory Left of failure to halt extremism

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LORD GILMOUR of Craigmillar, as Sir Ian Gilmour one of the most prominent "wets" of the Thatcher era, has denounced left-wing Tories for being ineffective and failing to stop Britain becoming Europe's most right-wing nation.

The former Cabinet minister says in an article in the February edition of *Prospect*, the new political monthly, that both Labour and the Liberal Democrats "show signs of being closer to One Nation Toryism than does Major's Government".

Lord Gilmour writes that

Britain has become "easily the most right-wing country in Western Europe, something which it has never been before in its history".

One Nation Tories remained remarkably passive while the Government became "in many ways more extreme than Lady Thatcher's had ever been". He blames many of those on the Left of the party for failing to wake up to the fact that they had been outplayed by right-wing Conservatives and for showing "astonishing" quiescence. Looking ahead to the possibility of defeat in the general

election, he predicts that an opposition Tory party led by Michael Portillo will be ruled by a nationalism that will be "stridently offensive to our European partners".

Lord Gilmour, who was sacked as Lord Privy Seal in 1981, dismisses the Right's claim that the presence of left-wing Cabinet ministers indicates the influence of the Left. Ministers such as Gillian Shephard, Kenneth Clarke, William Waldegrave and Sir George Young, had introduced right-wing policies ranging from rail privatisation to tax cuts, he says.

NEC told to rethink ballot decision

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

A ROW over allegations of ballot-rigging that has split Labour activists in Swindon was sent back to the party's National Executive Committee by a High Court judge yesterday.

Sir John Vinelott said that the NEC should compile a new report on events surrounding the selection of Michael Wills, a London-based TV producer, as the parliamentary candidate for Swindon North.

James D'Avila, a local councillor and union official who failed to win selection, claims that the ballot was rigged and is seeking an injunction to prevent the NEC from endorsing Mr Wills.

The row exposes the growing differences between old and new Labour. Many activists resent attempts by Labour chiefs to impose Blairite candidates.

The judge agreed to Labour's proposal that the NEC should decide how best to resolve the conflict and report back to the court in March. However, he did not accept an initial report by Peter Coleman, Labour's director of Development and Organisation, which rejected a proposed repeat ballot and recommended that the NEC select a new candidate itself.

The row began after serious procedural flaws were discovered when Mr Wills, a special adviser to Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, beat Mr D'Avila by 114 votes to 84 last September. Labour chiefs agreed that the selection cannot stand but argue that another ballot would be unnecessarily divisive. Yesterday the party agreed to compile a new report on the options open to the NEC and Sir John adjourned the case until March 6.

Mr D'Avila said after the hearing that he was sad to have had to resort to legal action and did not want to embarrass the party, but he added: "It has been worth it."



Gorman: says Labour will cave in to EU

Brussels 'blighting British life'

By ALICE THOMSON

THE eight former Whips Tory rebels yesterday launched their alternative to the Government's promised White Paper on this year's conference on the European Union.

Their document, called *Dire Directives*, calls for the scrapping of "undemocratic" Brussels directives. They list 18 that they say have blighted British life in areas such as meat hygiene, waste disposal and metrication.

A directive aimed at thwarting money laundering is said to have made it virtually impossible for grandparents to open small bank savings accounts for their grandchildren. "This blizzard of directives has got to be stopped," Christopher Gill (Ludlow) said.

The rebels praised John Major for his decision to publish a White Paper and to resist subjecting Britain to a "cascade of propaganda" on the single currency. Teresa Gorman (Billerica) said that the White Paper meant that Mr Major had a "golden opportunity to distinguish us from the Labour Party, who are going to cave into Europe hook, line and sinker".

But Tom Spencer, a Tory MEP, described the rebels' document as "a recycling of myths" about Brussels. "I hope it gets a resounding and long-lasting yawn."

Blunkett pressed to clarify policy

By JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

SENIOR Labour backbenchers are urging David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, to spell out the party's position on Britain's remaining grammar schools.

Modernising MPs fear that the future over Harriet Harman's decision to send her son to a selective grammar school has muddled Labour's message. The party has a long-standing policy to end selection, but last year it was revised to allow for the future of grammar schools to be determined by parents of children at nearby primary schools. They would be consulted on any plan to end selection—probably by ballot.

Parents of children already attending a grammar school will not be given a say on the ground that they will not be affected by any decision to abolish selection.

The latest policy document, agreed at last year's party conference, says: "While we

have never supported grammar schools in their exclusion of children by examination, change can only come through local agreement. Such change in the character of the school would only follow a clear demonstration of support from the parents affected by the decision."

Most interpreted the new phrase as a softening of opposition to selection, but Mr Blunkett confused the message by saying in his conference speech: "Watch my lips, no selection, no interviews." His tough language was aimed at ensuring party backing for a new policy on grant-maintained schools, but the phrase has been seized on by Labour leftwingers criticising Ms Harman. Her decision has prompted some modernisers to call for a further softening in the party's line. Several MPs argue that it is untenable to support choice, but oppose selection.

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons: questions to Social Security ministers and the Prime Minister; debate on the Finance Bill, committee; in the Lords: Family Law Bill, committee; Postal Marketing Scheme (Commencement of Revocation) Order 1995.

TODAY in the Commons: backbench debates will be followed by the afternoon by education and employment questions and a Labour-initiated debate on the National Health Service. In the Lords: opportunities in the proposed free trade area of the Americas; motor sport industry; Companies Act (Miscellaneous Accounting Amendments) Regulations; Financial Services Act (Investment Services) (Extension of Scope of Act) Order.

Claims go to watchdog

SERIOUS allegations against ministers and Tory MPs by Mohamed Al Fayed are to be referred to the new Commons disciplinary committee (Arthur Leathley writes).

Mr Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods and the Ritz, Paris, made a string of written accusations, including that an MP asked him for a £60,000 payment, to the Commons Privileges Committee last

November. The committee agreed yesterday to delete most of his claims from an official report but to pass them to the Standards and Privileges Committee for possible further investigation.

Mr Al Fayed made the allegations in evidence over *The Guardian's* use of a bogus fax to the hotel purportedly from Jonathan Aitken, the former Cabinet minister.

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HURY

Import duties fiasco leads to sobering times for Ukraine's café society

FROM LESIA RUDAKEVICH
IN KIEV

ON THE streets of Kiev, kiosks no longer sell Western-brand cigarettes, stores are running out of favourite liquors and bars are cutting back on cocktails.

The dwindling supply of Western alcohol and cigarettes will be a sobering experience for many. Ukrainian companies halted imports on January 1 and vowed not to bring in Western spirits unless the country overhauls customs and excise policies. For a nation grow-

ing used to its Beefeaters and Baileys — and for British exporters counting on a burgeoning market — the move means millions of dollars in lost business and tax revenue, not to mention millions of unhappy Ukrainians.

Already the halt on alcohol imports is wreaking havoc in small cafés, bars and restaurants. "We used to have eight pages of liquor menu. Now we only have one," said Volodymyr Reymov, manager of Kiev's Owl nightclub. "Only the mafia and racketeers win with these manoeuvres in taxes." Res-

taurants can survive by switching to domestic drinks, but small cafés and bars that depend on a wide range of liquor are not likely to weather this rationing.

The shortages stem from an honest, but bungled, attempt by the state to retrieve lost taxes on cigarette and alcohol sales. A presidential decree last September ordered that by October all imports on alcohol and cigarettes would be subject to new excise taxes. Proof of payment by importers was to be a special excise stamp put on each bottle and pack. The decree ordered

the Cabinet to issue detailed instructions on compliance within two weeks and designated September 15 as a cut-off date for sales of products without stamps.

But the tax inspectorate of Ukraine began to print and sell stamps to importers only on October 20, five days after the decree took effect. Making matters worse, the Cabinet belatedly issued instructions only two days before the cut-off date. At that point, all previous imports had yet to be stamped. New imports, too, would require stamps.

"In Russia, importers got three months to comply, but in Ukraine we were five days late before we even started. Stamps were not around and already we were forbidden to sell what we had imported," says Valentin Kobilyanski, vice-president of MDM Ukraine, a subsidiary of a Canadian-Ukrainian joint venture.

If the excise stamp fiasco merely delayed imports, changes to the tax regime created a bigger mess. The same belated Cabinet directive altered two essential principles in import duties. Instead of that

percentage customs duty of 50 per cent, the rate became a fixed percentage of 7.2 ecu (£5.83) per litre of alcohol — at which point the customs duty jumped eightfold because a similar scheme was not applied in excise taxes.

A squabble between two branches of government has thwarted any resolution. The Cabinet is only empowered to alter customs duties; the right to amend excise policies belongs to the Supreme Soviet. The national legislature has refused to adopt a corrector scheme.

Thanks to the changes, importers are being asked to pay \$24 (£15) for every dollar's worth of liquor they bring in, and buyers would face a store price of about \$30 a bottle. "At that price no one is going to buy, so everyone stopped importing liquor," said Yuri Yarmoshanov, a tax specialist with MDM.

The irony is that the Government is rapidly losing the money it tried to retrieve in the first place. According to World Bank calculations, yearly government budget losses in revenue from the current tax scheme will total \$90 million.

Maastricht critic Séguin prepares to replace Juppé

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

PHILIPPE SÉGUIN, Speaker of the National Assembly, has insisted in recent weeks that he does not want to be Prime Minister, while discreetly manoeuvring himself into a position to take over the job.

"It is too early," he commented this week, when quizzed on his ambitions. "Being a Prime Minister, that is a dog's life. I do not think about that all the time."

The incumbent, Alain Juppé, appears increasingly vulnerable as he struggles to salvage what remains of his welfare reform plans, and M Séguin is plainly thinking of little else as he hovers in the wings.

The prospect that President Chirac may replace M Juppé with M Séguin, an outspoken critic of the Maastricht treaty, has added fresh fuel to the debate over the single European currency.

Even Jacques Delors, the former European Commission president, has acknowledged that economic slow-downs in France and Germany have cast the EMU schedule into doubt.

M Juppé has been criticised for his aloof and technocratic approach to government. His efforts to overhaul the welfare system, reduce the deficit and ensure that France qualifies

for a single European currency provoked the worst strikes since 1968, from which his Government is still feeling the effects.

The Prime Minister survived the industrial unrest by offering key concessions to the strikers and gradually many of the elements in his reform plan have been stripped away. A new tax to reimburse the social security debt is still on track, but most recently the Government offered concessions to doctors angered at proposed health cuts and agreed to scrap plans to tax family allowances.



Séguin: bloodhound seeking a dog's life

Dangerously weak. M Juppé has also been subjected to mounting attacks from within the ruling coalition, particularly from supporters of Edouard Balladur, the former Prime Minister, while anti-Maastricht campaigners have proposed constitutional amendments to protect the sovereignty of France, including the statement that the franc is the currency of the French republic.

As the economic situation has deteriorated, M Séguin has stepped up his condemnation of Maastricht. Last week he accused the treaty's framers of "historic stupidity". At the same time, in an attempt to tone down his reputation as an uncompromising anti-European, M Séguin has recently limited his criticism to the methods by which monetary union should be implemented, not the notion itself.

To replace M Juppé with M Séguin would nonetheless signal an important shift in emphasis by the Chirac Government, which has made deficit reduction and the march to Maastricht a priority. But the Speaker may be the only man with sufficient clout to hold the ruling coalition together in the run-up to the 1998 legislative elections.

"I cannot see who else could do it if Juppé goes," one presidential confidant said. In addition to a loyal bloc of 30 Séguinists in parliament, the Speaker has been quietly building up his power base by putting out feelers to other partners in the ruling coalition.

During last month's strikes, M Séguin was photographed chatting with striking train drivers in what was plainly intended as a direct criticism of M Juppé's policies.

The two men, who cordially dislike each other, could hardly be more different. Where M Juppé is intense, efficient and almost wholly lacking in charisma, M Séguin is an extrovert of great bonhomie and charm, as well as cunning.

With his drooping cheeks and mournful eyes, M Séguin is often compared to a bloodhound, in both looks and tenacity. The Speaker plainly seems blood in the air, and many observers predict that within months he will be living the "dog's life" he professes not to want.

Leading article, page 17

Hope high as Kohl kicks off jobs talks

FROM ROGER BOYES
IN BONN

AN AMBITIOUS meeting of German politicians, employers and union leaders began last night under the chairmanship of Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, in an attempt to generate jobs and sharpen competitiveness.

Expectations were high before the closed-door session, with Hans Olaf Henkel, the head of the Confederation of German Industry, calling for the "creation of two million more jobs by the year 2000" — well beyond the trade union blueprint. Klaus Zwickel, chief of the powerful engineering and metalworkers' union, has proposed an "Alliance for Work", in which unions promise to keep down wage claims in return for 300,000 new jobs over three years.

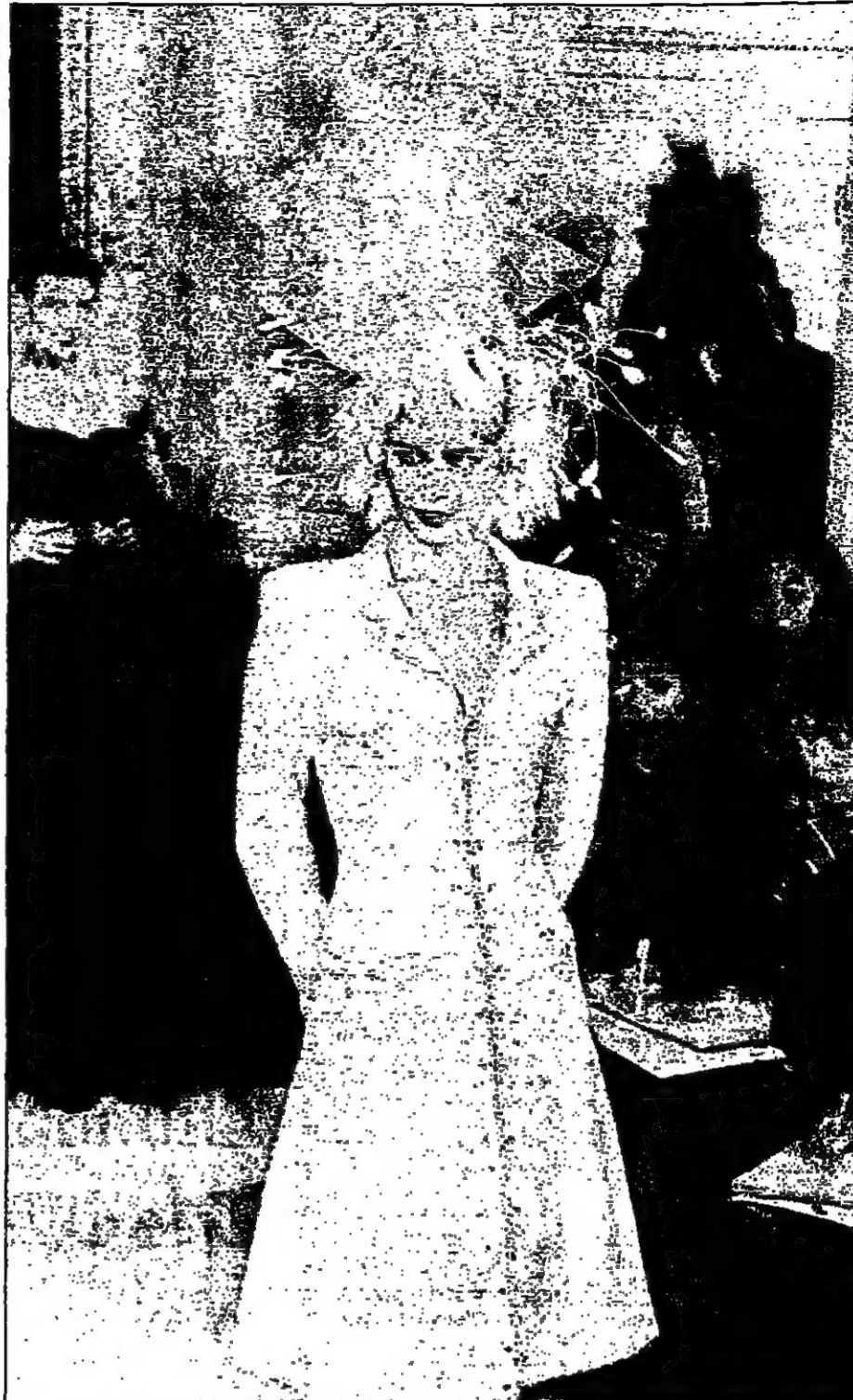
Both men seemed unreasonably optimistic, and sober economic experts said that, whatever catalogue of measures was eventually accepted, the most feasible goal was to push the total level of unemployment some way below the present four million.

There were two problems confronting Herr Kohl as he presented a list of some 50 possible measures. The first is that the huge unemployment figure — set to reach 10 per cent of the workforce this year, excluding over one million Germans on various government training schemes — has coincided with a crisis in welfare state financing.

The need to meet the European monetary union convergence criteria has concentrated the minds of the Government on the need for cuts in social spending. But almost all the Government's proposals for creating jobs involve more spending, or the shattering of economic and social taboos. The enormous cost of rebuilding eastern Germany continues to complicate calculations.

The second problem is the Chancellor's thin ten-seat parliamentary majority. He is politically more vulnerable than at any previous time in his 13 years in power. Yet any bold steps towards reviving the German economy requires some form of political confrontation.

Even apparently harmless suggestions, such as extending shopping hours, immediately prompt bickering within the Government. Disagreement was thus programmed in advance, and cracks in the trade unions' strategy were also starting to become apparent.



Claudia Schiffer models a redingote bridal gown designed by Karl Lagerfeld

Whiff of the past for Chanel

BY IAN R. WEBB

KARL LAGERFELD yesterday unveiled his collection for the House of Chanel in the intimate Ritz Hotel apartments which were for years the home of Coco Chanel.

Lagerfeld called his collection a "Love Story 25 years later..." and the 300 guests, who touched the dresses as they went by, admired outfits shown by supermodels Claudia Schiffer, Kate Moss, Naomi Campbell, Nadja Auermann, and the new face of Chanel, British aristocrat Stella Tennant.

His new look was inspired by Coco Chanel's designs

from her heyday on the eve of the Second World War which Lagerfeld described as "frivolity in the face of danger".

For day, a long, lean silhouette in black, navy and cream highlighted with sorbet shades of raspberry pink and soft apricot. Jackets hugged the body while skirts lapped out like an upturned champagne flute. This was Lagerfeld at his most minimal. Apart from the occasional brooch or gold belt, the only decorations were feathers in the model's hair.

For evening there were plenty of black chiffon ruffles

and yet more feathers, but Lagerfeld also introduced a little razzmatazz with three colourful dresses, in red, purple and sky blue, so heavily embroidered with trinkets and beads that they rattled as the models walked through the rooms.

An updated version of Chanel's cream edge-to-edge suit with the familiar black outline (now cut in mother of pearl and jet sequin paillettes with a hemline sweeping the floor) was the perfect tribute to the couturier's memory. It was also a glorious triumph for Lagerfeld.

Schiffer's personal views on the euro are far from certain. She has said she does not share the opinion of a fellow model who refused to get out of bed for less than \$10,000. But would Schiffer get out of bed for a euro? She was busy yesterday on the Paris catwalks and unavailable for comment. A fashion journalist, with links to the model, said Schiffer had never made a public political statement. "I imagine she is in favour of the euro as long as she is paid enough of them."

Although naming the new coinage euro was largely a German initiative, there is a lack of enthusiasm about it. Helmut Schmidt, the former Chancellor, who supports the new currency, refused an invitation to attend a Brussels brainstorming session on how to present the product.



Brink: challenging for world balloon record

Balloonist evades Fokker fall-out

BY OLIVER AUGUST

A DUTCH balloonist preparing to join the race around the world has been forced to rescue his craft from the fallout of the Fokker financial collapse.

Henk Brink, who will be competing with Richard Branson for the record, had been using Fokker facilities at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport to put the final touches to the pressurised capsule of his "Unicef Flyer", a combined helium and hot air balloon. Mr Brink has retrieved his balloon from the Fokker hangar, fearing that closure of the company would mean the death of his ambition.

A spokesman said: "Fokker is in a very

dramatic situation. If it comes to a closure of the factory, maybe due to legal procedures it would have been very difficult to get the capsule out."

Fokker's majority shareholder, Daimler-Benz, indicated this week it would no longer support the loss-making company, which for the past five years had been helping Mr Brink to build his 200ft balloon and was one of the main sponsors of his project. He moved it to a hangar owned by KLM, the Dutch airline, and intends to transport it to Nijmegen on Friday for the launch, which has been postponed repeatedly because of strong winds.

Fokker's founder, Anthony Fokker, fled

to his native Holland days after the end of the First World War in 1918, fearing for his life as revolutionary unrest gripped defeated Germany. With him he took 20 of the latest Fokker D.VIIs, remembered as the finest single-seat fighters of the war.

Fokker rebuilt his aerospace company in the same set of hangars in Amsterdam from which Mr Brink has now removed his balloon. The hangars are presently also being used to store some of Fokker's greatest planes, including one of the triplanes flown by Manfred von Richthofen, "the Red Baron", the top German fighter "ace" of the First World War.

Yeltsin demands club rights

FROM RICHARD BEESTON
IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT Yeltsin yesterday appealed to the Council of Europe to approve Russia's membership in spite of mounting criticism of the country's human rights record in Chechnia.

In a blunt message to the 36-nation group, which is due to decide on Moscow's application tomorrow, Russia's leader insisted his Government respected human rights and gave a warning that rejection

would be tantamount to supporting the Chechen rebels.

"In a broader context, this will be interpreted as a refusal to back those who are fighting to reassert democratic principles and institutions in Russia," the Kremlin leader added in his letter.

Russia applied to join the Strasbourg-based organisation, which promotes democracy and human rights in Europe, in May 1992. Its application was frozen last year after its bloody assault on Chechnia, which is estimated

to have cost 20,000 lives. Although much international criticism had died down, Mr Yeltsin faces new protests over his heavy-handed tactics in dealing with the Chechen hostage crisis earlier this month and a purge of his administration's last liberal members.

Some leading states are expected to support Russia's application. Hervé de Charette, the French Foreign Minister, said after meeting Mr Yeltsin this week that Russia should be accepted.

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Threat to political hopes of low-caste heroine

Film revives demand for arrest of 'bandit queen'

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

A FILM called *Bandit Queen*, about India's most famous outlaw, is about to open in Delhi, where the low-caste, illiterate former gang leader lives in the suburbs with her new husband. The film has reawakened the anger of high-caste Thakurs she supposedly slaughtered, and she could soon be rearrested.

Phoolan Devi, released on parole two years ago, is contemplating a political career: she is the darling of the nation's Untouchables — more usually described as Dalits, meaning the oppressed — who comprise almost a quarter of the population. She is seeking to assume the leadership of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh, which has a population of 120 million and is the country's most politically influential state.

Her arrest would cause an outcry among low-castes, who are increasingly assertive and politically aware. The supreme court has issued notices

inquiring why her parole should not be cancelled. This followed a ruling by a lower court overturning a decision by the Uttar Pradesh state government to withdraw all charges against her.

She has never faced trial, but was held in prison for 11 years because of political pressure from the powerful



An actress wields a rifle in the film as Miss Devi

Thakur community in Uttar Pradesh, who want her hanged. Miss Devi is alleged to have shot 20 of them 15 years ago in what has often been described as a revenge attack after she was gang-raped. Her rape is a central event in the new film, which had its premiere last week at the Indian Film Festival in Delhi.

She joined the film's maker, Shekhar Kapoor, on the stage, to loud applause. Dressed in a silk sari and wearing flowers in her hair she looked anything but a dacoit, or bandit. Mr Kapoor left before the screening because he said he could not bear to watch what was left of the film after the censors had cut many scenes. He invited the audience to stand up in a symbolic objection to censorship: not a single person in the packed auditorium remained seated.

Mr Kapoor said the censors had deleted scenes that revealed that casteism and fe-

male exploitation "are sanctioned by [Hindu] religion". The censors also removed swear words, which he said were important because they demonstrated Miss Devi's early rebelliousness.

Miss Devi has been touring Uttar Pradesh to test the political waters and has drawn huge crowds. Thakurs are outraged: they have erected a stone memorial in the hamlet where her gang supposedly massacred members of their community and have stepped up their campaign to have her arrested again.

The former bandit was released from jail essentially because it played well among low-caste voters. She says her exploits have been exaggerated and that she never even knew how to fire a gun.

The image of her carrying a rifle when she gave herself up to police in the early 1980s, however, is the one that sticks, and Thakur leaders say they will not rest until she is dead.



Miss Devi, alleged to have shot 20 men, says she never knew how to fire a gun

Unicef to study China's orphans

FROM JONATHAN MURRAY IN HONG KONG

UNICEF is going to conduct a three-year survey of China's orphanages during which it will train workers and help to set new management standards. The announcement comes after human rights groups claimed orphans are systematically neglected and starved to death.

Unicef said it will work with the Chinese Government to identify those orphanages most at risk and help to improve rehabilitation programmes for physically disabled children. In all, \$850,000 (£560,000) is set aside for 1996 and 1997.

While co-operating with Unicef, China yesterday arrested two human rights activists over "dying rooms" allegations. One man, held for two days and accused of trying to overthrow the Government, has been released but is under surveillance. He is the brother of Dr Zhang Shuyun, the woman doctor who highlighted the scandal.

Spanish minister puts EMU in doubt

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

A SERIOUS crack appeared yesterday in the effort to keep a united front on the timetable for European monetary union (EMU) when Carlos Westendorp, the Spanish Foreign Minister, suggested delaying the project if all the main European states were not ready to join.

He said it would be ill-advised to proceed with the January 1999 launch of EMU if Spain, Britain and Italy were not among the founding states. He suggested "stopping the clock", the technique often used in European Union negotiations, to push back deadlines.

Although opposition politicians and commentators across Europe are talking of a delay in the face of the current economic downturn, Señor Westendorp's remarks to reporters in Madrid breached the tacit agreement among European leaders to remain publicly confident on the fate of EMU. Although Goran Persson, the Swedish Finance Minister, made similar remarks on Monday, Señor Westendorp's statement carries weight because of the authority he acquired as chairman of the so-called Reflection Group, the team which prepared the ground for the forthcoming review of the Maastricht treaty.

Señor Westendorp was speaking privately to the journalists, one of whom reported his remarks to the Spanish news agency. It was therefore not intended to be a public statement challenging the current doctrine, but will nonetheless be highly unwelcome in Brussels.

Prostitutes to share £122,000 from EC

BY CHARLES BREMNER

PROSTITUTES in Austria and Spain will benefit from the largesse of the European Commission under a scheme to hand out £4.8 million to combat "social exclusion".

The Commission chose prostitutes' welfare schemes in Vienna and Bilbao among 86 successful applicants. In all, 2,000 applications were made for grants as part of the annual social programme.

Some £122,000 will go to the two welfare programmes, which seek to help the women, through counselling and other means, to get away from prostitution and find work.

The women qualified for help as victims of exclusion and poverty, said the spokeswoman for Pádraig Flynn, the Social Affairs Commissioner. "There has been very vigorous selection. It is not a question of handing money over to these people as individuals."

"The Commission will stay in close contact with the beneficiaries as they put their plans into action," a Brussels executive statement said. Most of the grants will go to help drug addicts, the unemployed and "marginalised" young, battered women and elderly people.

Britain and Germany fielded 400 applications each for the grants, the highest number in the European Union. Among nine projects receiving grants in Britain are the Norfolk Adult Education Service and Glasgow University.

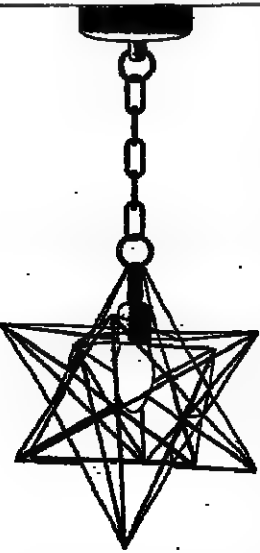
Nine projects in Ireland given awards under the guidance of the Irish Commissioner include the Schizophrenia Society of Ireland.

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The diagram shows the style of the 2 sizes of light fitting involved: item number 9525 (small), price £90 and item number 9526 (large), price £100. These were sold in Bhs stores from June 1995. The light fittings have a brass frame with clear glass panels and are of a distinctive "star" shape. They are suspended from the ceiling on a linked brass chain.

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Ref No 2207

Assassin tells court he killed Rabin to obey Jewish law

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

YIGAL AMIR, a 25-year-old right-wing Jewish law student, yesterday admitted in a Tel Aviv court that he assassinated Yitzhak Rabin at a peace rally on November 4 last year. He said that he had no regrets and boasted that he had shot the Prime Minister "for the glory of God".

In a four-hour court appearance, Mr Amir cited a Jewish law that says an "oppressor" can be killed to save lives. Some religious Jews, notably those living in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, applied the "oppressor" title to Rabin because they said his policy of peace with the Palestinians led to deadly suicide attacks on Jewish targets by Islamic militants and the handing over part of the biblical land of Israel to the Arabs. Mr Amir stood up at one point and announced: "Everything I did, I did for the glory of God."

Legal experts observing the hearing predicted that he would receive the mandatory life sentence for the killing when a verdict is handed down. He is living in a special isolation cell in a southern Israeli prison, constructed in an attempt to save him from what officials believe are inevitable revenge attacks by fellow inmates.

Hours before the hearing, *Yediot Aharonot*, the Israeli newspaper, published extracts from Mr Amir's interrogation by the Shin Bet internal security service and an account of lie detector tests which showed that there was a possibility he was hiding names of other Jews involved in the killing. According to the transcript Mr Amir, a graduate of two Jewish seminaries, told his

interrogators that the religious law under which Rabin was regarded as an "oppressor" was equivalent to a biblical commandment.

"If I was conquering the land now, I would have to kill babies and children as it is written in [the book of] Joshua. I would do it with no moral problem, despite the fact that in retrospect it seems like a moral problem, because it is a commandment," he is reported to have said.

During the interrogation, Mr Amir is also said to have spoken about his admiration for Baruch Goldstein, the Jewish settler from New York who killed 29 Palestinian worshippers in a Hebron mosque in 1994. He is reported to have said that when flirting with girls, he usually asked them first what they thought of Goldstein. "To get to know a person I usually ask one question: 'What do you think about Baruch Goldstein?' That tells me if a girl is attractive or shallow," Mr

Amir reportedly told the Shin Bet questioners, one of whom described his method of flirting as "The Goldstein Test".

When Mr Amir was brought into court yesterday, he smiled briefly and at one stage one of his sisters, Hadas, was asked to leave the crowded courtroom for talking during the proceedings. In his statement, the self-confessed assassin contradicted himself several times.

At one point he said he would have settled for removing Rabin from office by severely injuring him. Later he said that after firing the first shot, he fired twice more with bullets specially modified by his brother, Hagai, to make sure the Prime Minister would die. "I did not want to leave any chance that he would stay alive as Prime Minister," Mr Amir told the court.

When asked by Judge Edmond Levy whether he now regretted shooting Mr Rabin, Mr Amir responded swiftly: "No". His main defence lawyer, Jonathan Ray Goldberg, a Jewish settler who emigrated to the occupied West Bank from Texas several years ago, said that he had not wished Mr Amir to make the lengthy statement to the court. Mr Goldberg added that he had asked his client to enter a "not guilty" plea.

Mordechai Ofrit, Mr Amir's second defence lawyer, told the judge that he wanted to resign from the case because he had been marginalised. Judge Levy responded that it was up to the court to decide whether he could do so, and asked him to be present at the next hearing on Sunday, when the first prosecution witnesses will give evidence.



Amir: he shot victim "for the glory of God"



Amira Yassin and Muhammad Yassin, both eight, at their engagement party in Aqaba, Jordan. According to local newspapers such a public ceremony is unprecedented in the town but private ones are not unknown

Envoys are snubbed by Abacha

BY MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

GENERAL SANI ABACHA, the head of the Nigerian military Government, has refused to meet a five-man Commonwealth delegation urging a return to democracy. Nigeria was suspended from Commonwealth membership after executing Ogoni activists and violating human and civil rights. The Commonwealth resolved to send a delegation of senior foreign ministers to set out for General Abacha the conditions for an end to the suspension and warn him of tougher sanctions if he failed to act.

The delegation, chaired by Nathan Shamuyarira of Zimbabwe, has twice tried to set a date for a meeting with General Abacha, but has been rebuffed. No new date has been set and negotiations have reached a stalemate.

The chief opponent of the mission is Tom Iliadi, the Nigerian Foreign Minister, who is still furious at being ostracised during the Auckland Commonwealth summit last year.

Venezuela sees oil deal as path back to prosperity

FROM GABRIELLA GAMINI IN CARACAS

INTERNATIONAL oil companies have promised millions of dollars to rejuvenate Venezuela's ailing oil industry and have bought profit-sharing contracts for rich reserves from the Government.

Venezuela is Opec's third-largest oil producer, with a capacity of 2.9 million barrels a day, but its potential has never been fully exploited by the state-owned company, which has so far controlled the reserves. The return of foreign oil companies to the country, 20 years after the petroleum industry was nationalised, coincides with the thirty-eighth anniversary of Venezuelan democracy and is expected to breathe new life into the country's battered economy, demoralised by high inflation.

Mobil from America led a group of three companies which clinched the contract to exploit the attractive La Ceiba block near Lake Maracaibo, while Dupont, another American-owned company, secured the Gulf of Paria West block, just off the country's north-eastern coast in the Caribbe-

an. Mobil led a consortium that also included Veba Oel of Germany and Japan's Nippon Oil.

The contracts will give the companies 50 per cent of the profits, while the other half remains in government hands. The contracts stipulate a minimum investment of \$60 million (£38 million) per block.

This may mean the beginning of the end of the nation's financial crisis, said Edwin Arriena, Minister for Energy and Mines, announcing the privatisation. The Government will also this week officially launch a five-day tender for ten other blocks around the country, opening the door for oil companies to exploit the shores of the Orinoco River.

"We expect to be here for a long time," said Ronald Wilson, president of Mobil's Latin America business venture department. The so-called "oil opening" is expected to boost crude oil production by at least 500,000 barrels a day by 2005. With its vast oil riches and its proximity to the United

States, Venezuela has become important to trading and investment between North and South America. But the country's volatile political situation, exacerbated by government corruption scandals, and inflation of 70 per cent a month, have produced an economic crisis.

Venezuelans are hoping for a return to the oil boom of the 1970s, when their country was the richest in South America. Things took a downward turn when oil prices crashed in the early 1980s.

The oil industry was nationalised in 1976, through a state-holding company Petroleos de Venezuela, and profits were milked as corruption became rife. The poor were given food subsidies and cheap transport, while banks offered special exchange rate deals, until public coffers were empty.

Despite its oil income, Venezuela had to borrow heavily from international banks to pay its bills, with the result that it is now the continent's least stable economy.

Massacre trial for ex-leaders

Seoul: South Korean prosecutors charged ex-Presidents Roh Tae Woo and Chun Doo Hwan yesterday with sedition over the 1980 army massacre of pro-democracy activists in Kwangju.

The brutal quelling of the uprising against military rule in the southwestern city is one of the most traumatic chapters in South Korean history.

The two already face mutiny charges over the 1979 coup that propelled them to power. They also face corruption charges for amassing hundreds of millions of dollars during their rule. (Reuters)

Ciller offers to share top post

Ankara: Tansu Ciller, Turkey's caretaker Prime Minister, offered to share the premiership with a rival party leader, an apparent breakthrough in tough bargaining for the formation of a conservative coalition.

"I offered Mr Yilmaz a rotating premiership," Mrs Ciller said at a joint news conference with Mesut Yilmaz, the Motherland party leader. But he objected to Mrs Ciller's insistence that she be Prime Minister first. (Reuters)

Colombia leader denies drug link

Bogotá: President Samper's future appeared in serious jeopardy after Fernando Botero, the jailed chief of his 1994 campaign, said on television that the leader knew his election bid was funded by the Cali drug cartel.

Troops patrolled Bogotá as President Samper, who has been plagued by the allegations, went on Colombian national television to deny the "slandorous statements". (AP)

Muslim leader's travel ban lifted

An Egyptian court agreed to lift a travel ban on Mamoun el-Habibi, a leading member of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, the oldest and most influential Islamic activist organisation in the Middle East (Michael Binyon writes). It said there was no proof that he was a security threat or intended to establish ties with other fundamentalists.

Polish Premier's fate in balance

The fate of Jozef Oleksy, the Polish Prime Minister, and his Government dominated by former Communists, hung in the balance as military prosecutors prepared to submit a report on KGB recruitment activities in Warsaw (Roger Boyes writes). The Prime Minister denies espionage.

Hiss of life

Phnom Penh: An entire Cambodian village has taken to worshipping a large python found under a house as a god that can heal the sick, after claiming its presence cured aches and chest pains. (AFP)

Arafat plays the lottery card

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER

LOTTERY fever in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is the latest by-product of Palestinian autonomy. The establishment of the Palestinian National Lottery, complete with scratch cards in the national colours of red, green, white and black, was announced yesterday.

"Now that we have got a legally elected parliament, a President, an anthem, a passport and a radio and television station, we had to have that other attribute of the modern

state — our own lottery," a Palestinian journalist said.

Despite fierce resistance from Islamic fundamentalists, who oppose any form of gambling, the lottery, to be run from the West Bank town of Ramallah by a private company operating under guidelines similar to those laid down for Camelot in Britain, has already received the blessing of Yassir Arafat and will make its first televised draw on March 9.

"Since the announcement, the phone has not stopped ringing with people wanting

to know when they can start to play," Dima Samman, 32, one of the directors, said. "We have copied a number of other national lotteries, but ours will be unique in that a large share of the profits will go to the families of Palestinian martyrs from the intifada against Israel."

Initially the top prize will be limited to 100,000 shekels (£21,000), compared to the guaranteed minimum first prize of 6 million shekels available in this week's draw for Lotto, the rival Israeli lottery.

Japanese schoolgirls sell their bodies in pursuit of West's designer labels

FROM PIERRE HODSON
IN TOKYO

PART-TIME prostitution is a growing industry in Japan among university students, graduates — and schoolgirls. A long recession has made jobs harder to find over the past two years, especially for women.

In desperation, increasing numbers of women graduates have taken to working in "hostess" bars, where sex with their *salariman* customers, although not officially

encouraged, is an after-hours optional extra. Some advertise themselves in "dating" magazines with their physical characteristics, telephone numbers and the maximum age of an "ideal" partner — usually up to 50 years. Others give their photographs and personal details to escort agencies for circulation in glossy directories.

Although being paid for sexual intercourse is illegal, the law seems to be honoured more in the breach than the observance. "Soapland" salons offer massage services and

"image" clubs entertain clients' fantasies. Popular roles are "nurses", "O.L." (office ladies) and, predictably, "schoolgirls".

But now high-school students are offering the real thing. In a letter to the *Yomiuri* daily newspaper, Junko Uda complains: "I cannot understand today's high-school girls. They seem like hostesses or prostitutes rather than students. Their fashions are indecent — bright-coloured lipstick and nail polish, pagers and mobile tele-

phones, brand-name bags and clothing such as Viviton, Chanel and Prada. They think it is fashionable to show their underclothes. They will do anything to get money, even selling their lingerie or bodies at date clubs."

For some years in Japan, there has been a brisk trade in used schoolgirls' knickers and school uniforms, but now a new trend has developed. In Nagoya, where sex industry restrictions are laxer than in Tokyo or Osaka, girls have been selling their *meishi*, name cards, with their photographs and tele-

phone numbers, for 3,000 to 5,000 yen (£20 to £35) a card to older businessmen.

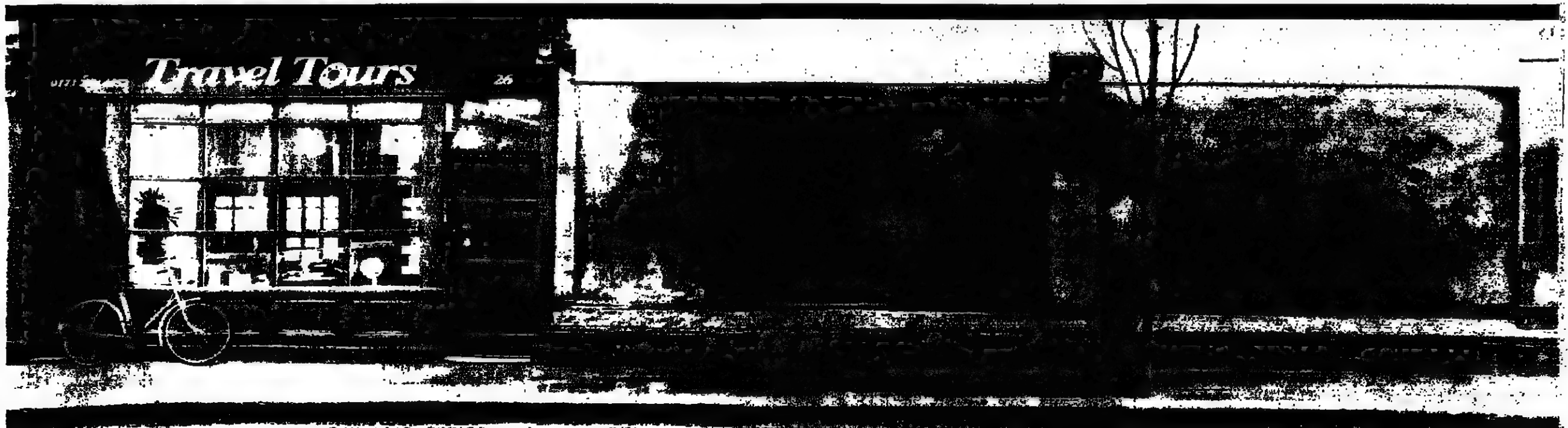
At 4pm, after school, groups of 16-year-old girls in school uniform gather outside Kamayama station, offering cards to *salariman* going home from work. Some offer and expect more. One asked a middle-aged *salariman* for 30,000 yen — about £200 — to show her knickers and, when he refused, suggested dancing as an extra inducement.

Asked whether she feared getting annoying phone calls, a schoolgirl

replied: "We use mobile phones — we are not so stupid as to give our home phone numbers."

While the alleged rape of a schoolgirl by US Marines in Okinawa has provoked outrage in Japan and elsewhere, and overshadows relations with America, an increasing number of high-school students earn money by casual sex.

Poverty drives the child prostitutes of Thailand or the Philippines, but Japanese schoolgirls seem to be motivated by the lure of fashion's designer labels.



[If you don't listen to your customers

'Saint Hillary' falls from grace over US sleaze

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

AMERICA will witness the extraordinary spectacle of its First Lady entering a courtroom in Washington's Pennsylvania Avenue on Friday through scrums of journalists and cameramen. There, she will face a grand jury of 23 citizens that has subpoenaed her because it suspects an obstruction of justice in the White House.

The unprecedented event will mark a dramatic new low point in the fortunes of the brilliant, tough, arrogant lawyer who arrived in the White House in January 1993 determined to transform the country, although she had been elected to nothing.

Three years later "Saint Hillary", as *The New York Times* once dubbed her, is easily the most unpopular First Lady ever and a considerable liability to her husband as he seeks reelection. Most Americans doubt her veracity; a columnist has labelled her a "congenital liar", and she and her husband have been nearly bankrupted by legal costs.

Mrs Clinton's woes originated in the mid-1980s, when her husband was Arkansas Governor. She was a member of Little Rock's Rose Law Firm, and both were partners in the Whitewater development corporation with James McDougal, owner of the failing Madison Guaranty savings and loan bank.

It is now known that Mr McDougal was channelling Madison funds into the Whitewater company, needed favours to keep the bank open from state officials appointed by Mr Clinton, and paid Mrs Clinton a handsome retainer for her legal services. Madison collapsed in 1989 at a cost to the taxpayer of \$60 million (£39 million).

Two years ago Kenneth Starr, the Whitewater special prosecutor, subpoenaed the Rose Law Firm's records of how much Mrs Clinton had billed Madison and for what; but the records had vanished.

Since then, much evidence has surfaced to suggest the White House went to great lengths to conceal Mrs Clinton's involvement with Madison.

It emerged that Vincent Foster, the Rose partner who became deputy White House counsel but later killed himself, removed files from the firm during the 1992 campaign.

Then panic engulfed the White House after the 1993 suicide of Mr Foster, who was handling the Whitewater affair. The Senate committee obtained records showing numerous calls that night between Mrs Clinton in Arkansas, Susan Thomas, a lawyer and friend of Mrs Clinton, in New York, and White House aides, three of whom searched Mr Foster's office. A Secret Service agent

lyn Huber, a personal aide of the Clintons, told the committee that someone had deposited the long-lost records on a table in the White House private quarters. Mr Starr immediately asked the White-water grand jury to subpoena Mrs Clinton, her lawyer and several staff. He is even testing the records for fingerprints.

Mrs Clinton might enjoy more support in her predicament had her credibility not been hurt so badly over the past few weeks by the "Travelgate" affair.

Soon after Mr Clinton took office, the White House sacked seven travel office employees and then called in the FBI to try to substantiate vague allegations against them. It did so on the bidding of Harry Thomason, an old Arkansas friend of the Clintons who was cycling its business for himself, and put the President's 25-year-old cousin in charge.

The White House press corps reacted furiously. The White House retreated and six were rehired. The seventh was charged with embezzlement, but a jury took barely an hour to acquit him. Mrs Clinton denied any role in the dismissals, but newly subpoenaed memos from White House aides say she pressed hard for the removal of the seven.

There are other counts against Mrs Clinton, ranging from the revelation that she once turned \$1,000 into \$100,000 on high-risk cattle futures through extensive help from well-placed friends, to her failure to acknowledge the woman who virtually co-authored her new book on children.

The saintly image Mrs Clinton likes to project is thus being replaced by another of a woman who shared the 1980s greed she publicly condemned; who cares for abstract humanity but stomps on ordinary men; and who is so full of self-righteousness she cannot abide anyone questioning her actions.

Most Americans doubt her veracity and she and her husband have been nearly bankrupted by legal costs.

testified about seeing Maggie Williams, Mrs Clinton's chief of staff, leaving with files — a charge she denies.

On January 5 — five days after a deadline for suing professionals who fraudulently advised corrupt savings and loans — the White House announced it had found the billing records and released them.

They were covered in Mr Starr's handwriting and showed that Mrs Clinton, who had testified that her work for Madison was "minimal", had put in 60 hours with two particular bursts of activity. One coincided with Madison seeking state approval for a recapitalisation scheme, and the second involved advice on a dubious property transaction that hastened Madison's collapse. Last Thursday Caro-



Brandt: her discovery is backed by scholars

Cupid emerges from the shadows

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

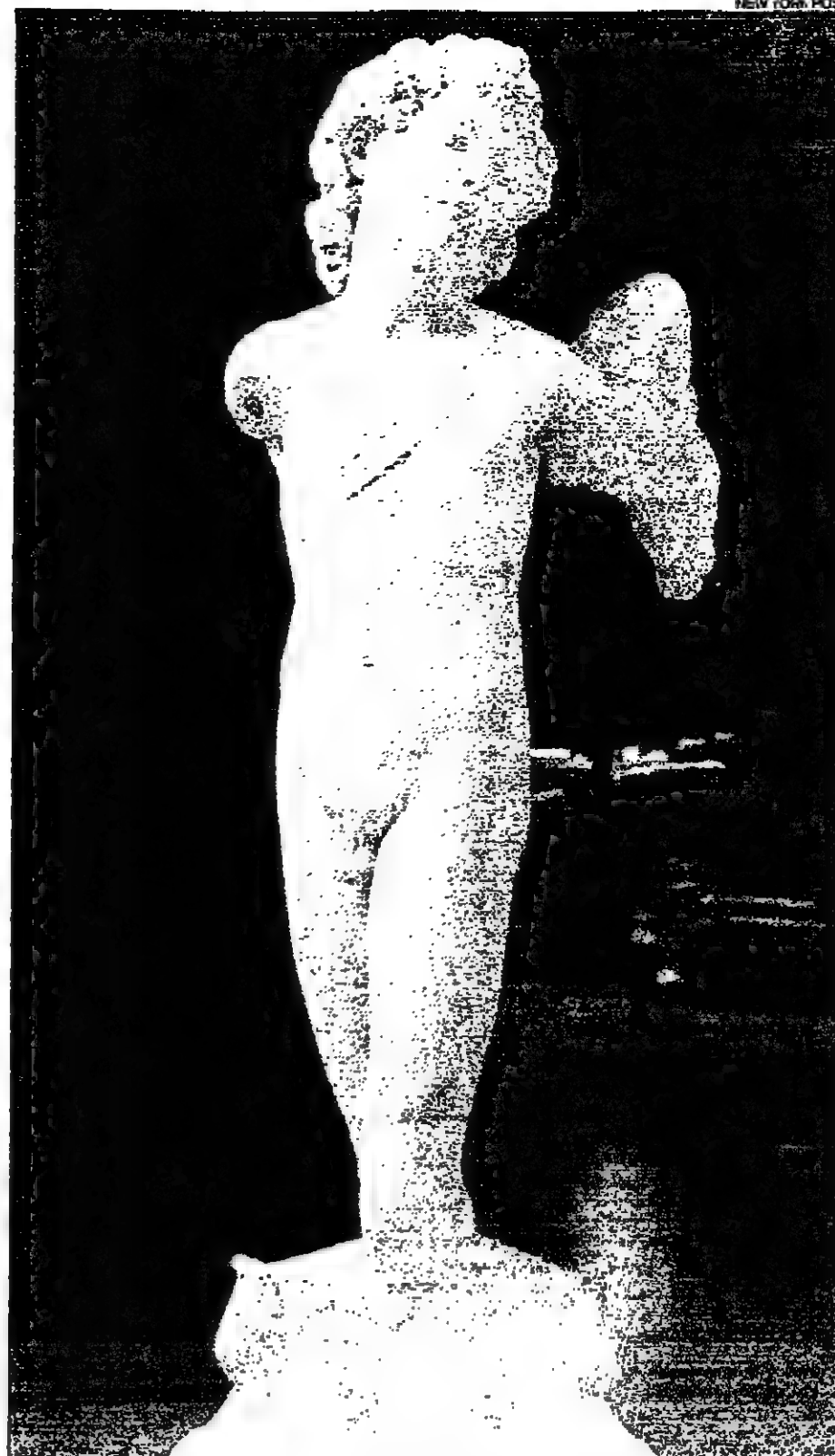
A STATUE of Cupid by Michelangelo has been "found" in the lobby of an old building on Fifth Avenue in New York. For years the priceless artefact has stood feet away from the thundering traffic and thieving throngs, guarded by little more than a doorman.

The building has been owned by the French Government since the 1950s and houses the offices of its Cultural Attaché. Countless cocktail parties have been held in the foyer but the guests, who included Manhattan's most assured aesthetes, were too busy snaffling canapés and sinking champagne to notice the treasure at their side.

The marble statue, depicting a naked youth, has now been credited to Michelangelo by a specialist in 16th century Italian art. Professor Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt of New York University's Fine Arts Institute says that the work belongs to the young Michelangelo, predating the maestro's Bacchus. She is supported by other scholars, including a senior curator from the National Gallery in London.

The English-born Professor Brandt spotted the statue during one of the attaché's recent sojourns. It was a rainswept night and she was walking past the door when she saw the statue. "I pressed my nose against the window and murmured 'blimey'," she said yesterday. "It is unfinished, damaged and has been occasionally restored, but it is ravishing — and priceless."

Professor Brandt, who advised the Vatican on the recent restoration of the Sistine chapel, decided to research the statue. She discovered that the piece was acquired in Rome by Stanford White, architect of the elegant Fifth Avenue townhouse he built for the prominent Whitney family in 1906. The Rome vendor described it as a freshly-unearthed antiquity, but Professor Brandt learnt that the statue had



The Michelangelo statue found languishing in the lobby of a New York building

visited the Vatican on the recent restoration of the Sistine chapel, decided to research the statue. She discovered that the piece was acquired in Rome by Stanford White, architect of the elegant Fifth Avenue townhouse he built for the prominent Whitney family in 1906. The Rome vendor described it as a freshly-unearthed antiquity, but Professor Brandt learnt that the statue had

earlier been offered at auction in London, where it was catalogued as a Michelangelo. It was returned to Rome after failing to attract its reserve price.

Nicholas Penny, the National Gallery's chief curator for the Italian Renaissance, told *The New York Times* that he is persuaded by Professor Brandt's research and conclusion. The statue, he said, was

"too peculiar" to be the work of another artist. "No faker would have given the boy a quiver of arrows made out of a lion's paw. Nor could anyone have faked the back of the head with its curls. It's just too inventive and too idiosyncratic." The statue normally languished in shadows, but on the night Mrs Brandt noticed it there was lighting from below.

Republicans told to behave

BY MARTIN FLETCHER

ANGRY Republican congressmen were being drilled on etiquette yesterday as tension between Congress and the White House threatened to turn President Clinton's State of the Union speech last night into an ugly partisan spectacle.

Republican leaders were warning rank-and-file members to suppress their desire to jeer or boo the President, because such behaviour would anger the roughly 50 million Americans who were expected to watch the event on television.

For his part, Mr Clinton was expected to skate over his bitter and unresolved battle with the Republican Congress

over how to balance the budget and, by extension, to shrink the Government without shredding America's social safety net. He was expected to sound a conciliatory note. Nor was the President expected to dwell on the problems of Hillary Clinton, who was planning to sit in the front row of the gallery.

Mr Clinton spent the day rewriting and polishing his address, and was intending to use it to spell out his vision for America's future as it approaches the 21st century and his case for a second term.

Mike McCurry, the White House press secretary, said Mr Clinton would emphasise America's economic progress

since he took office. "The economy is strong. It's growing. Inflation is low. Unemployment is low. The so-called misery-index is at a generation-length low," he said.

Mr Clinton was also likely to emphasise foreign policy accomplishments in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Haiti, the Middle East and Northern Ireland, and to name Barry McCaffrey as the new White House drugs czar.

Robert Dole, the Senate leader and Republican presidential front-runner, selected himself to deliver the Republicans' official response, thereby ensuring himself a huge dollop of free time on national television.

Brit-pop in US Top 10

New York: Two British rock groups have made the Top 10 charts in America, marking a welcome breakthrough for new "Brit-pop" after years when only veterans such as the Beatles and Eric Clapton seemed able to prevail (Quentin Letts writes).

Oasis and the lesser-known Bush, whose lead singer was educated at Westminster, have made numbers nine and five, respectively, in the latest *Billboard* album chart. Bush's *Sixteen Stone* is its debut album, while Oasis, with *What's the Story Morning Glory?*, has benefited from a much publicised tussle last summer with another British group, Blur.

New York blows its covers

BY QUENTIN LETTS

MANHOLE covers in New York have been sent flying in the air by subterranean blasts.

The exploding covers, compared to "landmines waiting to be stepped on", have shattered windows, overturned cars and injured pedestrians.

A series of explosions has been traced back to 1992. They seem to happen when the weather is at its coldest and officials at Con Edison, New York's power supply company, believe salt used to keep ice off the city's roads is to blame.

Salty water may be seeping on to electricity cables beneath the manholes, eroding their insulating layer and so creating a short circuit. That, in turn,

ignites methane or other gases that have built up from sewage or from the rotting of the cable.

The blasts are not connected to New York's celebrated steam which rises, Dante-esque, from holes in the ground — that is caused by cold waste water passing over hot subterranean pipes carrying steam to heat high-rise buildings.

"We are not certain about the cause of the explosions, but we believe the salt is to blame," Richard Molieri, a Con Edison spokesman, said yesterday. "Some of the explosions are just a little pop. Others can be worse." Since 1992 free-flying man-

hole covers have caused one death, 34 injuries, and flipped over a Brooklyn car.

A Manhattan building was evacuated after one explosion, and a startled Cardinal O'Connor of New York had his windows broken.

Professor Sam Schwartz, a former city engineer, said: "It's frightening and dangerous, as if New Yorkers don't have enough to worry about."

However, New York has 250,000 manholes and, so far, only 65 have been lifted. In lesser incidents, there have been fires. Mr Molieri said that research was continuing to discover the exact cause of the explosions.

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[Work smarter, not just harder]



Omar Sharif, now 63, still lives the life of a bachelor playboy. He talks to **Mary Riddell** about his passion for women, gambling and playing bridge

It has, what with one thing and another, seemed an intemperate life. Omar, blue-blazered ornament of the world's leading bridge tournament, balks at the word.

He stares fiercely through gold-rimmed spectacles, and the limpid brown eyes burn. *Zhivago*-style. "It takes two seconds to have a child. If every time a man makes love

And yes, he says, sometimes he is lonely. His Egyptian nationality has decreed for

into something more tranquil, and he hesitates. "Actually, no, I sleepwalk now, since I gave up smoking. I set up a video and filmed myself doing it. I have tried not to eat too much, so perhaps this is my body

A small price to pay, for this week he is happy. The luminaries of the bridge world drift in and out of his London hotel suite. "Omar, how good to see you again. Dinner? Where

Competition was stiff for single place on the 60-strong left vacant by the death last of Mark Bonham-Carter. It ters who proposes and



Sir Robert Fellowes

company. It is, says Lord Blake, a congenial dining club, though not all members have written something at some time".

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**St. Francis Drake
first-rate sea dog or
third-rate pirate?**
Arguments rage on
the 400th anniversary
of his death
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William Waldegrave and Roy Jenkins are members. So is the philosopher Sir Isaiah Berlin. The philosopher and former President of Trinity College, Oxford, Lord Quinton dines regularly. Sir Nicholas Henderson, formerly our man in America, is there. So are scribblers such as Frank

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Why can't British women win at work without feeling ashamed?

A survey shows American businesswomen are pushier than their British counterparts. Kimberly Fortier agrees

I'LL GET right to the point, since this is what American women are best known for. In business, a survey by the European Women's Management Development Network shows, American women are plain-speaking and goal-oriented. To the average British desk, this translates as pushy and ambitious. Whatever you call it, it seems to work. And that's the rub.

Why do we American women march into a business function, introduce ourselves to the chairman, and deliver a kind of mission statement? There are a million cultural and individual explanations for the differences between the way British and Americans work. They fall into a few simple categories.

National temperament. Americans have a firm belief in "manifest destiny" — we are born to fill an entire continent. Trouble in Ireland? We somehow believe that sending our President to switch on the Christmas lights will solve everything. Americans still have an empire-led mixture of confidence and romantic idealism. A 19th-century Englishman would understand this. A 20th-century Englishman would not.

Class system. America has a class system both devilishly complex and uniquely simplistic. It has to do with money, which has to do with power, which usually has to do with job. Americans define themselves by their jobs. I, once "rested" for a year, and I nearly killed me. Now, whenever I don't want to get out of bed, I remember that year — those nagging self-doubts, the flagging dinner party conversation as men leant over me to talk to other people. To an American, you are what you do, no matter who your great-grandmother was.

Ambition. When I was with *GO* magazine, we sponsored an Oxford Union debate. The topic was "I'd rather appear an effortless gentleman than an overwhelming achiever". Effortless gentlemen won hands down. It has taken me years to figure out that the British don't like overt ambition, while Americans see it as a top-billed virtue. We don't really think Scarlett Pimpernel. We think Andrew Carnegie. After three months in my first UK job, I sat down with my boss to discuss my **AMBITIONS**. "How," I wanted to know, "should I go about improving myself, therefore improving my position within the company?" He laughed.

The editorial team began to hum *If I Ruled the World* when I came in with breathless ideas for a better magazine. (It was, of course, the most insignificant person on the



Pushy — or simply goal orientated? Kimberly Fortier suffered culture shock when she came to London from America

magazine's masthead. I am still puzzled by the tag applied to me of (negative pause) "ambitious". It seemed so natural simply to state my goal and try to find out what I should be doing to achieve it.

Grandstanding. This is a terrific American term. It means working your tail off, and then bragging to everyone within earshot about your hard-earned successes. We also invented the slogan "no pain, no gain". I used to report regularly to my UK colleagues on my efforts. "I was here until 11 last night", or "I'll have to work all weekend to get this done". Every Brit to the last one replied: "Don't." But I've

noticed the (very English) man I work for sneaks in at 6am, so that he can leave with everyone else, pretending to work a normal day, achieving great things with effortless ease.

Confusing. The British are so admirable. In times of war they stand alone against massed enemies. They will queue for hours hoping for a can of Spam. They will even accept that there's no water in Yorkshire.

The one thing a Brit won't stand for is being embarrassed. And almost everything embarrasses them: introducing themselves to a stranger. Offering a service. Closing a

deal. It's all so pushy, so self-important, just too awful to consider. Americans, on the other hand, have a very high water mark for embarrassment.

The last time I was truly embarrassed was when my stockings fell down around my ankles in the midst of crossing Regent Street (don't ask). After that escapade, introducing myself to the head of the BBC was small fry.

Networking. The British hate the whole idea. The truth is, most Brits simply know everyone else, or at least the key players. And they have known them for several centuries. But Americans in Britain

have to network. Otherwise, the only people we would ever speak to would be taxi drivers and other Americans.

The British have a terrific defence mechanism against the networking American — an incredibly dry put-down technique. Luckily, as an American, you haven't quite figured it out (see ambition and embarrassment, above). You will probably just think they're nice. In the end they will capitulate and agree to go to lunch. After about 75 years, they will invite you home to dinner.

Kimberly Fortier is the Communications Director of Condit Nast.

The trouble with British businesswomen is that they are simply too embarrassed, says Giles Coren. No wonder their American rivals win every time

ON A company bonding weekend in the country, you are invited to play a game of tennis with the chairman. What he doesn't know is that you were once a Wimbledon junior champion.

US: Donna McSpleen, wearing a white Lycra catsuit and a headband, brandishes her £280 graphite Wilson Sledgehammer and informs the boss of her pedigree. She has him running all over the court to the point of cardiac emergency, and after winning the first set to love, informs him that his backhand could use a little work.

UK: Dorothy Small, on the other hand, keeps quiet. She says she hasn't played for a while and, trying to avoid looking pushy, pretends she is unable to return his pat-a-cake serves. Afterwards, in her neatly ironed Ann Jones skirt, dangling her wooden Maxply Fort, she tells him how he puts men half his age to shame, and what a great athlete he must have been once.

A COMPANY car becomes available:

US: Donna McSpleen walks into the office and throws an open copy of *Performance Car* onto the table. "I must have an Aston Martin DB7, in red. With a driver. I am my car," she says. "People associate me with what I drive, though I don't give a damn for cars, personally. My car must say power, thrust, attitude. It must say Top of the Range."

UK: Dorothy Small is terribly excited and thinks it best not to make too many demands just yet. When the fleet manager phones her she says: "Ooh, a Ford Mondeo. How posh." "Do you want the 16-valve?" he asks. "Oh, I don't think so," she replies. "One will be enough." She will secretly miss seeing old friends on the bus and, worried about damaging the new vehicle, will soon revert to the number 28.

YOU ARE invited to a high-powered cocktail party after work:

US: Ms McSpleen, who has a favourite seat at the Paris shows and whose measurements Karl Lagerfeld knows off by heart, tries to envisage the sort of party it will be. She goes to work in a black cocktail dress — as she often does anyway, knowing that 1990s daywear is influenced by evening dress — but with a Chanel jacket for the office. Carefully selected jewellery is applied later, and the jacket removed to reveal tanned shoulders and surgically enhanced bosom.

UK: Dorothy, who never feels quite comfortable in designer labels and anyway believes such an outlay on clothes can never be justified, prefers to shop instead at Marks & Spencer, where she has a store card. She suffers a sleepless night worrying that she will look dowdy, but at the same

time she knows she must not look as if she is trying too hard. Like all British women, she can envisage only two different types of dress: frilly taffeta costume or M&S standards. She opts for the safe navy suit she bought for her sister's wedding, and puts on a nice pair of earrings in the taxi.

AT THE party, you espy a group of big players standing in a circle talking:

US: Donna McSpleen has two tactics. The best option is to find someone you know well, and ask them to introduce you — it must be someone who likes you and will give you a big build-up. You then ad-

dress your target with the words: "I can't tell you how glad I am to meet you — I have been wanting to for years." So what if the British think you might have ulterior motives — that is what business is. There is no point pretending.

PRESENTING your card:

US: Donna had hers embossed on vellum by Ralph Lauren, gilt edged, with her e-mail address in hologram, and just a little too large to be dispatched into the credit card pocket of a wallet. Asked for it, she replies: "Sure, and let's do breakfast."

UK: Dorothy offers hesitantly: "Would you like my card? The company gave me stacks, but I never seem to use them. I'm afraid they still say 'Ol', and we don't have a telex any more. Had them for years. It



Joan Crawford having *The Best of Everything*

never seems the right moment does it? And then you only go and lose it" (small fitter).

DICTATING a letter:

US: Donna buzzes her secretary on the intercom: "Sly, leave your nails alone and get plugged into that tube. I want you to give that schmuck Levinson the usual brush-off. She's out with the Kennedys and won't be back till next year" etc etc. And have a draft of the Weinfield contract sent to my lawyers. And Sly, I want it there by yesterday."

UK: Dorothy, of course, peters down to the typing pool. "Mrs Walters, would you mind awfully typing this letter for me, it's only short. No real hurry. I hate to burden you with it so late in the afternoon... Oh, well, I suppose I might as well type it myself. No point wasting your time, and I could do with the practice."

And why can't Hollywood men be men?

Hollywood has spawned its own special breed of truly excruciating males. Giles Whittell reports from America on the crass, the craven and the corrupt

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Fabrizio: a laughing stock

As the film industry totters toward the end of the millennium churning out ever-increasing numbers of crass and corny action movies, Hollywood has become, more than ever, a magnet for men as crass and craven as their product.

This desperate breed is currently being examined in *Hollywood Men*, an ITV four-part series. Last week's episode featured Fabrizio, whose terra-cotta-tan and artfully moussed hair have made him both a cover model and the laughing stock of men everywhere; he is joined in future episodes by two other outlandish rogues and a figure of truly tragic hopelessness.

There is Mark Harris, a 46-year-old "showbiz promoter" whose only success has been in promoting himself. Calling himself the Phantom of the Kitchen — "everything Liberace did with the piano, I did with pots and pans" — he wormed his way into the world of Beverly Hills power-brunching and cashed out

spectacularly three years ago by marrying Martha Raye, a 78-year-old comedienne who had recently suffered a stroke. He is due to inherit her \$2.4 million estate.

There is Robert Evans, pro-

ducer, former cocaine-addict and author of a tell-all autobiography called *The Kid Stays In The Picture*. The title was a plaintive cry for attention from a has-been whose "comeback" film, *Sliver*, starring Sharon Stone, proved an embarrassing failure.

And there is Dennis Woodruff, loser personified. Mr Woodruff spends his time cruising the streets of Hollywood in a beat-up Cadillac adorned with his phone number and the message, "Hire me".

Ignored in all this are at least some regular guys among the industry's thousands of workers: boxers, agents, publicists, attorneys, "development executives", musicians and writers. Such people do exist.

My friend Yale Udoff, for example, manages to make screenwriting look like a normal nine-to-five job. Married to an estate agent, he has an office which he goes to every day in his favourite tweed jacket to write.

But his noble sort of toil is exceptional. Somer or later, most men who come to Hollywood go native. Whether with drugs or diet pills, on the beach or in the gym, they end

up conforming to the city's stereotypes.

Even the elite of creative talent is no less a caricature of the bottom of the food chain. Tom Arnold, whose career was launched by his first wife, the ribald but dowdy Roseanne, dumped her the moment *True Lies* made him a star. Jean-Claude Van Damme, the "muscles from Brussels" who has wrought a family-man image to counter his screen violence, seems about to fall from grace thanks to reports this week of a dalliance with a porn star. And no more need be said about the deeply human flaws Hugh Grant revealed on *Sunset Strip*.

It is no coincidence that the industry's real survivors are those who do not actually live in Hollywood. Harrison Ford spends every minute he can between films in splendid isolation on his ranch in Wyoming. Dennis Quaid has emigrated there as well. His film career may have stalled, but his marriage to Meg Ryan is intact and, rumour has it, so is his sanity. *Hollywood Men* is on ITV tomorrow at 9pm.

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Alan Coren



Worried by the state of the English novel? Help from on high is at hand

Walk into any of Crickwood's great public houses these days, and you will find your heart wrenched by the pitiful spectacle of strong men huddled glumly at tables, aimlessly doodling a finger in the froth of their untouched stout, silently piling pork scratchings into little curly wigwags, or merely sitting with their heads in their hands, raising them only to wipe the sleeves of their donkey jackets across their reddened eyes. Others, perhaps, will be leaning motionless on the window sill, staring into the street, or slumped at the bar picking their teeth with darts they lack the zest to fling, or abstractedly dismembering roll-ups they would no doubt have lit had they but found the will to turn their thoughts to which of their trouser pockets had the matches in.

What can it be that has brought them to this distracted pass? It is, of course, the current state of the English novel. In common with millions throughout the land, these men can think of little else. Where, they ask themselves — for they have only themselves left to ask: they are no longer able to discuss it with one another: they are all talked out — are the heirs of the Great Tradition, men and women able not only to dip their nibs in the pure well of English undefiled but also to address them to those universal and eternal themes that once swept English fiction to unprecedented heights at which the rest of the scribbling world could only gasp and goggle? What, goes the sad mumble, are we offered now but the convoluted witterings of self-indulgent minimalist, or the sterile mimickings of this or that modish foreign icon, or saddest of all, that desperate need for pith which drives the themeless novelist back to a more fertile past to offer us his speculations on cultures he never inhabited, heroes he never knew and wars he never fought?

Well, I mumbled all that myself, until just now. Just now, I put down a brilliant modern English novel I read at a single sitting, and when I tell you that that single sitting began just before just now, you will know that it is not only a brilliant novel but a short one, too. And none the worse for that: though it manages effortlessly to encompass the great eternal themes — birth, love, courage, human bonding, mortal fear, transcendence, faith, all that — it does so with a crystalline concision that leaves *haiku* at the post. It has only 988 words. More yet, it is as daringly experimental as it is successfully so. I tell you, there has never been a hero like this.

This is the story. Living in a remote (but idyllic) farmhouse, a lovely woman heavy with imminent child is cut off by snow at the first pang of labour, unable to get to hospital because her husband, though he worships her, cannot start his car, and their devoted dog, Fardick, can only wag his tail (a fine touch: would Hardy have thought of Fardick?). Tragically, the hero, who alone might save her, is not merely miles away, but frozen solid. What is to be done? Faith is to be done: God — in the thinly disguised person of a Mr Chumpey, who suddenly materialises *ex machina* — throws a bucket of hot water over the hero who, divinely thawed out, flies in search of the remote (but idyllic) farmhouse, not knowing that it is by now completely hidden by snow. By an amazing stroke of fortune, however, three pairs of red long johns have been left on the washing line, on spotting which the hero lands, gathers up Mrs Fairweather (good name, eh?), and ports her to hospital, where she is delivered of a fine baby boy, whose parents instantly name him Jack B. Fairweather. The B is in honour of the hero and rightly so, because though Mr Fairweather — clearly having read a fair bit of magical realism in his time — treats talking helicopters as commonplace, he recognises that this particular one is a bit special.

I have to tell you that, having been engrossed in the book for nearly a whole minute, I finally closed *Budget* and the *Blizzard* to find myself moved beyond admiration. I bought it only because I was curious to discover what Mr Frank Pearl, the renowned lawyer and hotelier, had seen in it to warrant his multimillion-dollar deal to publish it in the United States, but, believe me, I am curious no longer.



"I'm singin' in the rain, just singin' in the rain
What a glorious feelin', I'm hap-hap-happy again."

Tough on hypocrisy?

The organised hysteria of Harriet Harman's critics, Tory and Labour, obscures the truth about selection

Those who would change the world often wonder if that also includes their children. All men may be born equal, with an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But when we see Johnny gurgling in his cradle, the temptation to place the nearest silver spoon in his adorable mouth can be overwhelming. A Texan mother, Wanda Holloway, is presently on trial for plotting a murder to help her daughter's cheerleading career. "God," she said, "the things you do for your children."

Harriet Harman must be thinking the same. Her son Joe's 11-plus success has not only won him a place at St Olave's grammar school in Orpington. It has given her party and earned Joe the John Major award for gift horse of the year. E.M. Forster prayed that, if forced to choose between his country and his friends, he would have the courage to choose his friends. Ms Harman feels the same way about her party versus her family. She has opted for her family, to howls of derision from Tories who claim to defend that battered institution.

When politicians accuse one another of hypocrisy, the world claps a handkerchief to its nose and watches the steaming ordure piling on stage. The stench rising over the Commons yesterday was unendurable. I have heard Ms Harman give as good as she is now getting to those who use private healthcare rather than the NHS. But on her side. There is no incompatibility in seeking to reform a public service and yet continuing to use it in its pre-reformed state.

The creaming of southeast London primary schools by St Olave's grammar blatantly undermines the ability of rival schools to develop good sixth-forms. (I speak as a former governor of one of its rivals, Archbishop Tenison's.) The schools available to Ms Harman have all been victims of this cross-border raiding, encouraged by the Government's league table obsession. St Olave's is reportedly six times oversubscribed and parental choice is meaningless. Pupils are chosen by it, as in other selective systems such as Kent, Trafford and Redbridge. Nor is St Olave's likely to expand to admit all who want to come to it under Mr Major's former policy of parental choice. Its league ranking would plummet. That is why Mr Major appears to have switched his policy to supporting selection.

Politicians must live in this world, not in some idealised one. They everywhere risk the charge of hypocrisy. I am sure Ms Harman's Labour tormentors, such as Clare Short and Peter Hain, drive around town in cars when it suits them, defying Labour's commitment to public transport. I am sure that they claim mortgage interest tax relief, even if they might be against it. I am sure Tories now inveighing against divorce reform would make use of the "quickie" procedure if it suited them. Politicians demand jail sentences for drunk drivers, yet plenty drink and drive. They rail against those who smoke marijuana yet abuse themselves with alcohol and nicotine. For decades they condemned the poor to the horrors of high-rise architecture while tucking themselves snugly into neo-Georgian and neo-Tudor.

Or let us come closer to the point. Mr Major says he is tough on hypocrisy. Let him show the public one case of a Tory MP who would follow the logic of his own enthusiasm for selective education. Let his child sit and, for the sake of the argument, fail the 11-plus, be refused a grammar place and be sent off to a local secondary modern. Mr Major claims that under new selection, all schools would enjoy equality of esteem. That is what they said in 1944. Tell that to any south London school competing with St Olave's. I repeat, let the first Tory MP whose child fails the 11-plus and agrees to go to a secondary modern be the first to cry hypocrisy.

This utterly confused debate is being given top billing in what is already called the "run-up" to the next election. Let us restate some first principles. The right of a parent (or a patient) to use private money to buy a personal service is surely absolute. If I do not like some part of the welfare state, I can opt out, provided that I pay taxes to benefit the rest. Going private is a form of redistributive taxation. In education, the

proportion of children involved is small, roughly 8 per cent depending on definition.

How best to organise the public education sector is a different matter. It involves public money and should be based on equity. I may use private medicine, yet still believe that state medicine should not be skewed to benefit the middle class, the young or the economically active. The same applies to publicly financed education. For a quarter of a century after the war, British school administrators channelled children at the early age of 11 into grammar, technical or "modern" institutions for the rest of their school days.

For the quarter who were sent to grammar schools this was, not surprisingly, a success. Grammar schools did well because the cards were stacked in their favour. The 11-plus did boost the intake of working-class children to grammar schools, but it mostly entrenched a heavily subsidised middle-class ghetto within the state system. This was seen as not only unfair but also inefficient. For the 75 per cent rejected, it caused intense bitterness and yielded Britain the worst record for staying on at school in Europe. Hardly anybody thought it worked. It was all but abolished.

Mr Major's recent speeches suggest that he intends to avoid the "evils" of selection by parents somehow choosing a secondary school on the basis of the specialism in a subject. The school will then be allowed to "select" the most apt child. It is hard to believe that Mr Major or his advisers understand school administration. All enrolment is to some degree planned: the question is what criteria should be used where a school is oversubscribed. The idea of a range of local schools being specialised by subject and then open to free parental choice is meaningless. As for a parent or a teacher predicting a child's subject

specialism at 11, this is crass. If selection there is to be, at least base it on the crude equity of the old 11-plus.

The comprehensive revolution suffered from coinciding with a period of politicised nonsense about how schools should be run internally. No good secondary school can avoid streaming. The important question is at what age and in what form. This applies at "comprehensive" Elm as at comprehensive Holland Park. There have been dozens of models for achieving this without segregating at 11. They include multi-site campuses, streamed middle schools, selective high schools starting at 14 or 15 and selective sixth-form colleges. Already the divide between sixth-forms and technical colleges is being eroded, as it is between universities and polytechnics. By redistributing cash between institutions, policy bolstered the less fortunate without penalising success.

Mr Major's desire to revive selection at 11 should be a gift to Labour. It has been wrong-footed not so much by Mr Blair or Ms Harman as by its own silence on any controversial area of policy. The normally articulate education spokesman, David Blunkett, has yet to explain what "no selection, read my lips" means in the case of schools such as St Olave's. It must mean a pledge that Labour will force such schools to take a broad-based local intake and not be allowed to "vacuum up" bright pupils from other boroughs.

Mr Blunkett should be able to boast that the reorganisation that his party sponsored in the 1960s was mostly a success, however unpopular with middle-class parents who resent having to pay fees to avoid the bad old Inner London Education Authority comprehensives. Reorganisation has doubled the numbers getting an A-level pass, increased by six times those with good grades at O-level/GCSE and by seven times those staying on to further education.

There are bad secondary schools, but nothing like as bad as before 1965, or as bad as the "sinks" that would result from the present opt-out policy. Heaven knows how the British workforce would look had we stayed with 11-plus selection over the past 30 years, or if we were to go back to it now. This field is wide open to Labour. If Tony Blair cannot make hay in such political sunshine, how will he fare when winter comes?

The man versus the myth

Magnus Linklater gives Robert Burns the last word

Tomorrow is the 200th anniversary of the birthday of Robert Burns, the most idolised — and misunderstood — of poets. My local butcher has, no fewer than, five portraits of Robert Burns in his shop this week, to say nothing of a couple of busts and a model of the bard's cottage in a bottle. He expects to sell 1,000lb of haggis in the next few days and says he's never known a bigger turnover in such a short time. How many other poets shift merchandise as fast as that?

The Burns industry shows little sign of slowing down as Scotland celebrates its national poet. The only sadness is news of the death, yesterday, of Scotland's best-loved contemporary poet, Norman MacCaig. Burns is loved by biographers as well as butchers. More than 900 volumes have poured out since 1797, along with 2,000 editions of his poems and songs, and to judge by the acres of newspaper copy he has inspired this week, there is no end in sight. Whether in consequence we have any clearer perception of the man or his work is doubtful. Across the world tomorrow there will be thousands of Burns Night suppers with their whisky-drenched rituals and their toasts to an immortal memory that is impossibly blurred by myth.

"The man they talk I'm kent the better," wrote Burns optimistically; the opposite is probably true. The man is now so smothered in his own mythology that it may be impossible to rescue him. Burns the ploughman-poet, Burns the lover, Burns the champion of women's rights, Burns the drinker, Burns the nationalist or Burns the Unionist have all been claimed by enthusiasts whose knowledge is mostly shrouded in a romantic mist. "He is a myth evolved by the popular imagination, a communal poetic creation, a protean figure," wrote the Orkney poet Edwin Muir. "We can all shape him to our likeness, for the myth is endlessly adaptable."

It is not that we know too little about Burns: it is that we know too much. Unlike Shakespeare, whose biographical details are sketchy at best, Burns's life is an open book. He wrote compulsively about himself, analysing his increasingly complicated affairs in hundreds of letters sent to his friends. In turn boasting, self-pitying, defiant, craven and delightfully witty, he comes across as a flawed but completely human being. Almost everyone he met tended to record what they thought. The Duchess of Gordon told Sir Walter Scott that she had never met a man "whose conversation so completely carried her off her feet".

Long before his death, the stories of his bastard children, his penury and his politics had become widespread and Burns himself was aware of the way that these were distorting his literary reputation. "My success has encouraged such a shoal of ill-spawned monsters to crawl into public notice under the title of Scots Poets, that the very term Scots Poetry borders on the burlesque," he wrote. His love songs were murdered on the music-hall stage, his politically charged poetry was seized on by adherents of every faction. By the 19th century, he was being claimed by Carlyle as an imperial hero and Robert Louis Stevenson as a model of the upwardly mobile working-class man.

Today he is hailed by Conservatives ("Be Britons still to Britons true, among ourselves united...") and by nationalists ("We're bought and sold for English gold! Such a parcel of rogues in a nation"). As Charles Kennedy, MP, wrote pointedly out this week: "He was obviously all things to all men, so he was clearly a Lib Dem."

The truth is that Burns was politically and morally a mass of inconsistency. He felt passionately about causes, but kept changing them. He supported the French Revolution to the extent of financing a consignment of cannon to the *sans-culottes*. But then he went off it. He was lyrical and stirring about Scotland, but had to temper his radicalism when he began to work for the Government as an exciseman. He was an early feminist, championing the rights of women, but treated them abominably, fathering nine illegitimate children and leaving some of them without support. He complained constantly about poverty but died reasonably well-off. He called himself a man of the people but was a highly placed Freemason, a member of the Royal Dumfriesshire Volunteers and the Royal Company of Archers; two of his sons became colonels in the army of the East India Company and both retired to Cheltenham.

Perhaps, in the end, it is safest to fall back on the work and not the man. We should mark this 200th anniversary by celebrating the early poetry, which is the richest, the Merry Muses which are the bawdiest, the later songs which are the most lyrical, and the letters which are the most human part of him. We should forget that he has been taken prisoner and exploited by successive generations of propagandists and pundits and remember instead the enormous pleasure his verse has given to people who would never otherwise count themselves poetry-lovers. And we should leave him with the last, lyrical word, a stanza which Walter Scott thought contained "the essence of a thousand love-tales":

Had we never lov'd so kindly,
Had we never lov'd so blindly,
Never met — or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

A non-runner

GRANADA'S victory over Forte has brought on a bout of nerves in France. The country's leading racing event, the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, is at stake — Forte is its sponsor.

Yesterday the French Jockey Club said that it was concerned for the race's future. Gerry Robinson, the chief executive of Granada, has said that he does not intend to continue sponsoring the race.

"Clearly, Granada does not want to take over, and we will be in the market looking for a sponsor," said Louis Romanet, director of the French Jockey Club. "It is a difficult economic situation for us to look for sponsors." The previous sponsor was the Aga Khan's Ciga hotel group which ran into financial difficulties.

Forte's sponsorship gave Sir Rocco the chance to throw one of the most lavish parties of the year at the Arc, which takes place at the beginning of October. Guests were flown in from all over the world. Regulars included Lord Lichfield, Lord Rothschild, the Duke of Marlborough and Pamela Harriman, and an interest in racing was not a prerequisite.

This year's race seems safe — Forte is contracted to sponsor the

event and Granada has taken on that contract. The bookies are already working out the odds for the future.

Class apart

HARRIET HARMAN and her young son Joseph's schooling will soon be eclipsed by a new educational scandal. A faction of the



"Waiter, there's a P45 in my soup"

National Union of Students has accused Jeremy Paxman of perpetuating the class divide.

The slur comes in a motion submitted by five colleges of further education for the NUS conference in March: "This conference believes the perpetuation of the class divide has been prolonged by the reintroduction of University Challenge." Further education colleges should be allowed on the show and Paxman should be replaced by the winsome presenter of *Pets Win Prizes*, Dale Winton.

Paxman sympathises but says there are already too many competitors. "I'm a great admirer of Dale Winton, though. Why stop there? Let's have Anthea Turner for *Mastermind*. Or Bernard Manning for *Brain of Britain*."

● The BBC's gripping documentary, *The House*, about the carnage backstage at the Royal Opera House, is considered essential viewing. Rehearsals at the Welsh National Opera in Cardiff were cancelled so the cast could watch last night's episode.

Armani weeds

ARMANI suits are flapping after the arrival by post at the London offices of the advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather of a large package. Addressed simply to the In-



formation Technology Department, it was opened and found to contain six and a half kilos of cannabis with an estimated street value of close to £30,000. Police have been called.

A spokesman for the company refuses to comment on the investigation. But one employee tells me: "It's very weird. Some people here are suggesting it was sent to help the creative process. Now it just seems an awful waste."

● John Major's statement yesterday in Prime Minister's Question Time, "Tough on hypocrisy, tough on the causes of hypocrisy," floored Tony Blair as he tried to steer debate away from Harriet Harman. Credit for the soundbite goes to Major's political secretary Howell James (a good friend of Labour spin-merchant Peter Mandelson), and his assistant George Bridges. "It was a collabo-

rative effort — and they're pleased as punch," says a source.

McNasty back

ILIE NASTASE, the Romanian tennis player whose outbursts on court were exceeded only by those of John McEnroe, is to swing into action again. In Scotland. At 49, he will play in a Legends event at the World Doubles Cup at Craiglockhart in May.

Although he has been elected a member of Romania's ruling Social Democrat party and last week announced plans to run for mayor of Bucharest, he hasn't lost a delight in gamesmanship that has seen complaints about him even on the over-35 tour. He plans to take to the court in a kilt.

Lord's forte

AMONG the supporters rallying behind the diminutive Lord Forte this week will have been the nuns at St Mary's School, Ascot. All five of Lord Forte's daughters were convent girls and he proved to be a generous benefactor in his own way — he funded a new refectory. Giancarlo, his second youngest daughter and a lively girl, did not last the course, however. She was expelled from the school after setting off the fire alarm at midnight



Giancarlo Forte: nun too happy

and running off in her voluminous regulation nightdress. Then, as now with Granada's victory, the nuns turned to St Jude, the patron saint of lost causes.

● Royals will be gathering at All Saints Church at St Paul's Walden, Hertfordshire, on Saturday for the funeral of the Hon Lady Bowes Lyon, one of the Queen's only two remaining aunts, who died at the weekend, aged 89. She was the sister-in-law of the Queen Mother, who lived at St Paul's Walden Bury as a child and was convinced there were fairies at the bottom of the garden.

P.H.S



ARMS AND THE MEN

Mitchell alone may not be enough to secure talks

Since the guns first fell silent in Northern Ireland, peace has depended more on building confidence by patient diplomacy than on great leaps forward. It would be too much to expect that the Mitchell report on decommissioning, to be unveiled today, will dramatically advance the peace process. The issues may be clarified by international negotiators but the responsibility for moving matters on still rests with the politicians: in Belfast, Dublin, and, most crucially, Westminster. John Major, in particular, must now consider how to maintain momentum.

Senator Mitchell and his two colleagues were asked to square a circle. Unionists originally argued that they would not enter talks while Sinn Féin/IRA apparently reserved the right, and certainly the resources, to return to violence if they did not get their way. Conscious of these concerns, the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, outlined during a trip to America the key concession required of the paramilitaries before he was confident that all-party talks could begin. Washington Three, as it became known, stipulated at least a token surrender of weapons.

Sinn Féin/IRA regard Washington Three as a delaying tactic. They insist that their numbers give them the mandate to enter negotiations immediately. From Haifa to Harare, they argue, terrorists have kept their weapons until negotiations ended and 17 months of ceasefire should be seen as commitment enough to peace.

The Mitchell solution seems to be an attempt to get the British Government off the hook of Washington Three by substituting a new test for Sinn Féin/IRA's good faith. Sinn Féin is apparently to be asked to endorse the concept of "consent".

British ministers may be only too happy to find a more flexible route for Sinn Féin to approach the negotiating table but much

will depend on how consent is defined. Any declaration from Sinn Féin would do nothing to assuage Unionist fears unless it recognised that the majority of Northern Ireland's voters must agree to any change. Sinn Féin cannot give such a guarantee without accepting the legitimacy of a Province it exists to oppose. So far it has sought refuge in ambiguity. It is unlikely to change now.

Given the elusiveness of agreement on what constitutes consent, other methods of inching towards inclusive talks may have to be explored. David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists, has argued for the establishment of a body elected by the people of Northern Ireland in which all the parties could explore positions and build trust.

Significantly, he has already conceded that the IRA need not surrender any arms before Sinn Féin could sit in such a body. Moreover, it would not have to commit itself to a notion of consent at odds with its ideology.

Irish nationalists, from Flannia Fail to the SDLP and Sinn Féin, still see the convention as Mr Trimble's Trojan Horse. They suspect that any elected body would be used by the Unionists to reassert majority rule in Ulster. They should think again. The Unionists have accepted that any such body should have a short shelf-life, specifically to prevent it becoming another Stormont. To his credit the Taoiseach, John Bruton, is believed to feel that such a body could have a role, if it operated alongside the two Governments and sought to build links across the border.

Establishing a constitutional convention would require risk-taking on Mr Major's part, but failing to see if such an initiative would work might pose greater risks. An elected body could concentrate minds and consolidate fragile trust. It does not deserve to be sidelined in the search for peace.

THE PLOT UNRAVELS

Events are scuppering Franco-German plans for Europe

The Maastricht strategy for European integration is "an historic stupidity". The treaty is "obsolete... dead", and the blueprint for Europe it represents is "an explosive mixture of naive ultra-liberalism and restrictive regulation" that "will end in disaster". Maastricht "should be renegotiated". Neither France nor Germany can possibly meet the criteria for European monetary union. It would be "no drama" if the timetable were pushed back.

These rebellious utterances come not from one of John Major's "bastards". They come from the heart of the French Establishment, from Peugeot to the Société Générale and the employers' federation and from some of the country's most prominent politicians. After more than three years of post-referendum silence on the subject of "European construction", unemployment, a stubbornly flat economy and social unrest have combined to break open floodgates of hitherto suppressed doubt about France's official irrevocable commitment to the 1999 target for EMU.

Because the spending cuts he is seeking to impose are now indelibly associated in the public mind with Maastricht, the debate has become bound up with Alain Juppé's masterplan to overhaul France's welfare budget — and with his future as Prime Minister. The Juppé plan, already shredded by successive concessions to strikers and demonstrators, faces further constitutional challenges in the National Assembly this week. The EMU-sceptics range across the political spectrum, from Philippe Séguin, the Gaullist Speaker of the Assembly who is an old and close friend of President Chirac and a potential successor to M Juppé, all the way to Jean-Pierre Chevènement, the veteran

Socialist who is this week demanding a constitutional amendment confirming the franc as the currency of the French Republic.

Even Jacques Delors, keen as he was to blow the Euro trumpet at yesterday's launch of the publicity campaign for the new currency in Brussels, has begun to voice guarded doubts. The former President of the Commission has lost none of his passion for European integration. But as an economist, even he can see the risk that prolonged recession in France and Germany will wreck his grand project. He has begun to hint that if the EMU timetable slips, it will be no tragedy and that a single currency should be seen not as an end in itself, only "a means to an end". This message is as relevant to Helmut Kohl, whose support for EMU is based on his dream of a federal Europe, as it is to France. M Chirac needs a German ladder down which to climb. Herr Kohl's interests lie in offering him one.

The French President's vague promise last weekend of a Franco-German drive to boost consumer spending, yet to be confirmed in Bonn, is pitifully irrelevant. It skirts the truth, which is that both Governments are floundering in their efforts to kickstart growth — and that both will continue to flounder so long as policy is driven by Maastricht's arbitrary targets. Both countries are shedding jobs by the hundreds of thousands; both Governments have politically difficult reforms to sell to their electorates. Neither has voters ready to die for Maastricht — let alone the euro. If Herr Kohl would only accept that the righting of Germany's domestic troubles takes priority over the EMU timetable, M Chirac would feel free to turn, with heartfelt relief, to those of France.

THE FAMOUS FIVE PICK A DILLY

Never mind the quality of Enid Blyton, count the royalties

The Famous Five are Julian, Dick, George, Anne, and, of course, Timmy the Dog. They find adventure and excitement wherever they go. How will they solve this latest mystery — the mystery of Trocadero plc?

"I'm scared," whimpered Anne. "This tunnel is so dirty, and rude grown-ups keep pushing." "Buck up, old girl," panted Julian. "Nearly there!" He was panting because a notice said he had to carry Timmy on the escalator. And Timmy was a large dog whose tail kept on annoying passengers who were hurrying impatiently past on the left.

At the top the children felt lost in the crowds. Until now their adventures had been in open-air settings such as mystery moors. And here they were at the heart of the bad city. They were better at camp-fires than at getting through the automatic ticket-gates. And as soon as Tommy George had seen how they worked, Timmy disgraced himself. A stern policeman fined Julian on the spot of all their pocket-money.

"I hate this place," sniffled Anne. "Why do we have to come here? And who is Trocadero?" He sounds like a smuggler. "This is Piccadilly," explained Julian. "Uncle Quentin calls it the Heart of the Empire. I suppose those rough men in sleeping bags have come from its lairs. When Uncle Quentin was a young man, on Boat Race night he put a policeman's helmet on the head of that statue of the rude boy shooting an arrow. I have heard him tell the story when he was jolly after dinner. Trocadero is a famous company from Piccadilly. And it has bought our

copyright. So we have to get across the traffic somehow to book in with the directors."

"Do you mean that we no longer belong to Aunt Enid?" sobbed Anne. "We have been with her since 1942, and I don't feel a day older." "There, there, pretty little Anne," said Julian putting his arm round her. "It's not so bad. Aunt Enid's daughter is going to keep an eye on us. They say they are going to maximise our profitability and preserve the integrity of Aunt Enid's work and reputation."

"But does that mean that we are going to have to change our adventures, like our chum, silly little Noddy, who has lost his friend Dr Golly?" cried Dick. "I hear that Big Ears is having cosmetic surgery because he upsets the aurally challenged."

"No," said Julian, cheerfully. "We can carry on having a wonderful time and falling into adventure just as before. Clever-clogs sneer at us for being racist, sexist, mindless and determinedly middle-class. Other highbrows say our plots are fundamentally stunted and our characters never change. But they cannot argue with eight million Enid Blyton books still being sold every year. 27 years after Auntie went to the big Kurrin Island in the sky. We must be getting something right if so many children still love us. And now we have to solve our biggest mystery ever. How to cross Piccadilly Circus. If we can crack this adventure, Trocadero has a welcome-on-board beano for us with lashings of ginger pop and cake. Except that in its boardroom they serve a wizard new local lemonade called Hooch."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Harriet Harman's selection of St Olave's for her son

From Mr John Adebisi

Sir, The important issue in the debate on Harriet Harman's decision to send her son to a grammar school (reports and leading articles, January 22, 23) is that she is a senior member of a political party committed to the abolition of selection for schools on the basis of ability.

As a member of a future Labour government, Ms Harman will thus seek to deprive my children of the opportunities of which she so readily avails herself for her own.

One of the principal reasons that St Olave's School in Orpington is capable of providing such a good education for its pupils is that it has been able to select the most able and motivated candidates.

In its ideologically motivated pursuit of equality at all costs, the Labour Party threatens the disappearance of such centres of excellence, leaving children from all backgrounds with few alternatives to the mediocrity and under-achievement which seem prevalent in so many of our schools.

If selection produces schools with standards high enough for the children of Labour politicians, then it is Labour education policy rather than selective schools which must change.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN ADEBISI,
30 Cranbrook Road,
Chiswick, W4
January 23

From Dr Richard Turner

Sir, It would be quite wrong for Harriet Harman to prejudice the education of her child now just because she hopes to establish a better education system based on a different principle at some time in the future.

I have worked all my life to improve the National Health Service; but similarly, if the NHS could not provide me with the treatment I needed when I needed it, I would have no hesitation in looking to the private sector.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD TURNER,
68 Duchy Road,
Harrogate, North Yorkshire.
January 22

Maxwell and Labour

From Mr David Winnick, MP for Walsall North (Labour)

Sir, Much is being written again about the character and behaviour of the late Robert Maxwell in the light of the court case acquitting his two sons. Isn't it of some interest that the two things Maxwell certainly didn't succeed in bullying and intimidating were the Labour Party and the House of Commons? While, alas, Maxwell was briefly a Labour MP he never managed, despite many efforts, to get elected to the national executive, and certainly failed in his attempts to get another and winnable seat.

As for the Commons, no commentators have ever suggested that Maxwell's characteristic contemptuous manner towards others ever made much of an impact in the House, or was ever likely to do so.

But then, of course, he didn't own either.

Yours etc,
DAVID WINNICK,
House of Commons.
January 22

African jaunt

From Mr Robert Boyd

Sir, I was delighted to read (report, January 19) that two pilots have set off in a 60-year-old Tiger Moth on a repeat of Alan Cobham's pioneering flight to Cape Town in 1926.

I remember standing, as a small boy, alongside a cleared strip in the bush close to Livingston, to watch Cobham land. He did not, as your map might indicate, land at Victoria Falls; instead, he overflew the falls, and in so doing got water from the continual spray into his fuel. This caused his engine to misfire and much concern amongst those awaiting his landing.

Yours etc,
ROBERT BOYD,
7 Acorn Drive,
Wokingham, Berkshire.
January 19

Interest rate cuts

From Mr Carl M. Chambers

Sir, We may have been surprised by the timing of the interest rate cut (reports, January 19), but surely no one can be surprised by the extent. There is tremendous political advantage in cutting rates by one quarter of a per cent at a time rather than half a per cent or more, i.e. the Chancellor gets at least twice as many chances to appear on TV and the radio proclaiming lower interest rates.

Whether that is what the long-term economy needs is a different matter — but what's long term in an election year?

Sincerely,
CARL M. CHAMBERS,
Flat 4, 1d Vermont Street, Hull.

Business letters, page 29

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

From Mr George Walden, MP for Buckingham (Conservative)

Sir, The explanation of Ms Harman's decision is simple: the country is living an educational life. Like her, the Government is obliged to pretend that comprehensives are doing a marvellous job — though not quite marvellous enough to send its own children there.

A similar hypocrisy characterises many a dinner-party conversation on education.

So long as politicians conspire to evade the truth, our Two-Nation educational culture will continue. Meanwhile, Ms Harman is merely obeying the golden rule in British education: *savez qui peut*. Like all Taruffier, her flounders have their comic side.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE WALDEN,
House of Commons.
January 22

From Mr Jacques A. Arnold, MP for Gravesend (Conservative)

Sir, The contradictions of Labour's education policy have been highlighted by the recent activities of Harriet Harman.

Her choice to put forward her son for selection by a grant-maintained grammar school in a Conservative borough would not be available under the Labour policy which she has yet again supported.

Under that policy, she would effectively be restricted to the choice she has already rejected for herself: that between schools in her local Labour borough.

Last night the House of Commons voted for a Conservative policy which provides new opportunities for grant-maintained schools to finance their capital programmes.

Ms Harman voted with Labour to deny schools like St Olave's those opportunities. Having accepted a place in the school one week, she opposes its ability to finance its development the next.

Yours faithfully,
JACQUES ARNOLD,
House of Commons.
January 23

Besppectacled drivers' jobs at risk

From Lieutenant Colonel A. G. G. Miller (ret)

Sir, You report (January 19) that thousands of lorry and bus drivers who wear spectacles or contact lenses face losing their jobs because of a new European directive that will force them to take eye tests using their uncorrected vision. The ruling has been justified on the ground that they might have an accident and kill someone if their glasses fell off or lenses fell out while driving.

About 3,500 lives are lost each year on the roads in the UK — fewer proportionately than in most other advanced nations in the world. How many of these deaths were caused by lorries or buses, driven by short-sighted drivers, whose glasses fell off and who then could see so little that they killed someone?

If we assume the probabilities in each instance to be one in ten then this EC intervention may save about one life every three years. However, I suspect that the actual probabilities are lower by orders of magnitude and that the chances of this legislation saving a life are negligible.

The endorsement of the legislation by the Department of Transport is both ignorant and craven. Has Mr

From Mr James McFarlane

Sir, Managers are always selective in choosing players for a football team, an orchestra or a play. Nobody would think there was any sense in fielding mixed-ability teams. Children with athletic, musical and artistic talents are recognised, trained and encouraged, amongst those of similar abilities. Nobody seeks deliberately to submerge them in the average.

So if this selection is all right, I wonder why the Labour Party thinks it is all wrong to do the same for children with mental talents. Why are they to be suppressed and denied the chance to develop amongst those of similar interests and aptitude? I wish Mr Blair would explain.

Yours very truly,
JAMES MCFARLANE,
24 Broad Street,
Ludlow, Shropshire.

From Mr Aaron Bell

Sir, As a sixth-form student at St Olave's I commend Ms Harman's decision in choosing this school for her son. I am sure that he will benefit, as I have, from the excellent range of opportunities here.

I think that the Labour Party should follow Ms Harman's lead. Grammar schools admirably serve the needs of able children from all backgrounds. Were St Olave's to be forced to change its current voluntary-aided status to become a fee-paying independent school, this would deprive many boys with great academic potential from attending. This potential problem under a Labour government would be exacerbated if the assisted places scheme were terminated.

Yours faithfully,
AARON BELL,
19 Hayne Road, Beckenham, Kent.

From Mr S. C. Pryor

Sir, Of course Mrs Dromey and her husband are entitled to send young Dromey to the school of their choice — I hope they are grateful to the Government for enabling them to do so.

Yours etc,
S. C. PRYOR,
Little Mill Cottage, Bures, Suffolk.

Norris, the Transport Minister, no conception of probability? Idiomatic legislation such as this must be stopped. Has he not given a thought to the countless safe and blameless drivers who may now lose their jobs? What of their lives and self-respect and the effect on their families, of this legislation?

Where will this sort of thinking end? Train and taxi drivers must surely be asked, and then what is to stop Mr Norris from imposing similar rules on private car drivers as well? Has Mr Norris any idea of how many short-sighted drivers there are who wear glasses?

Yours faithfully,
ALISTAIR MILLER,
Cromwell House,
Lutworth Cove, Dorset.
January 21

From Lord Campbell of Croy

Sir, With acknowledgement to the late Dorothy Parker, Men won't get passes in tests, wearing glasses.

Yours faithfully,
CAMPBELL OF CROY,
House of Lords.
January 19

Kidney patients' plight

From the Co-Chairman of the National Kidney Federation

Sir, It was reassuring to read (report, later editions, January 9) that the Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, recognised the unacceptable regional variations in health care provision. The need for urgent action is emphasised by your report, "Dialysis short-fall kills hundreds" (January 22), in which Professor Stewart Cameron calls for an end to the tragic situation where 1,000 people die each year. There is indeed a need to improve renal services; surely this latest information will prompt the minister to act swiftly.

It is to be hoped that the inequitable situation where the uptake of new end-stage renal patients of 39.6 per million population in Merseyside, 44.3 pmp in the Oxford region and well below the minimum uptake recommended by the Renal Association in many other areas (compared with 108.6 pmp in Wales) will be promptly addressed by better planning and funding.

As today's report points out, we are still awaiting publication of the Renal Service Review, completed in September 1994 and held back by the Department of Health after a lengthy sojourn in the Treasury.

It is believed the review will be the first all-embracing study of renal disease in this country, which is currently 21st in the European league table for providing quantity of care.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID POULTER,
F. HOWARTH,
Co-Chairmen,
National Kidney Federation,
6 Stanley Street,
Workshop, Nottinghamshire.
January 22

Yours,
S. T. DOBBS,
3 Warwick Close,
Market Harborough, Leicestershire.

Shortage of beds for acutely ill

From Professor John A. Dormandy and others

Sir, Potential patients should be aware of the crisis in the level of medical care available in southwest London, a crisis attested to by the vast majority of our consultant colleagues (report and leading article, January 12). This is principally due to the reduction in numbers of hospital beds as NHS funding has been diverted to community care, alongside an increase in the demand for hospitalisation.

The number of patients requiring emergency or urgent hospital admission has increased year round. There has been no reduction in the number of patients needing admission for elective surgery despite a greater use of day surgery.

We now have an average bed occupancy of 95 per cent. This is incompatible with safe medical practice because we cannot accommodate the inevitable fluctuations in emergency and urgent cases. Some patients have to be discharged early and some have to wait on trolleys in the accident and emergency department for beds, even overnight. Patients are cancelled without notice on the morning of "planned" admissions for which both they and their families have prepared. Many patients with urgent but non-emergency conditions cannot be admitted.

Central directives about Patient's Charter standards tell us to admit patients, even with relatively minor conditions, if they have waited 12 months or if they have had two previous admissions cancelled. These admirable ideals should surely not take priority over emergencies or serious conditions needing urgent treatment.

Our hospital managers and the local health purchasers are doing their best to solve these problems, but to no avail. Their extent and chronic nature must be understood at the highest levels within the NHS. The simple truth is that insufficient resources are allocated for the care of patients with acute conditions requiring urgent admission to hospital. There must be reinvestment to ensure that the Patient's Charter standard is consistent with our ability to maintain a comprehensive 24-hour emergency service and a high standard of in-patient care.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN A. DORMANDY
(Chairman of Surgical Services Centre,
St George's Healthcare NHS Trust),
MARK WANSBROUGH-JONES
(Chairman of Medical Services Centre,
St George's Healthcare NHS Trust),
M. SEMPLE
(Medical Director, Epsom Health Care NHS Trust),
R. COURTNEY-EVANS
(Medical Director, Mayday Healthcare NHS Trust),
St George's Hospital,
Blackshaw Road, SW17.
January 17

From the Chief Executive of Manchester Health Commission

Sir, Faced with the short-term imperative to ensure sufficient hospital beds are available for patients requiring emergency admission, NHS managers should not forget the increasing number of hospitals, particularly those in crisis, which report a significant proportion of their beds being occupied by people no longer requiring medical or nursing care.

These patients have been clinically discharged and are waiting for other agencies, primarily social services, to organise facilities or services to be provided at home before they can leave hospital. In Manchester up to 10 per cent of the city's acute hospital beds are occupied by such people.

This problem will increase in magnitude and raises questions about the future organisation and working together of health and social services at national and local levels.

Yours faithfully,
NEIL GOODWIN,
Chief Executive,
Manchester Health Commission,
Gateway House,
Piccadilly South, Manchester.
January 16

Present helpers

From Mr Richard J. Butler

Sir, If thanks can be given to God for the mixed blessings of the motor car (reports, January 18; letters, January 22) should we perhaps reflect on other suitable machines for such praise? I would suggest the domestic washing machine, which saves much drudgery without the associated killing and maiming.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD J. BUTLER,
Hynburn, 29 Villa Road,
Bingley, West Yorkshire.
January 19

Standing for gallantry

From Mr Anthony Gore

Sir, Had Giles Coren been faced by two women on the Tube (letters, January 20) he could have solved his problem in the manner of the old gentleman in the (Edwardian) *Punch* cartoon: "May I offer the elder of you two ladies my seat?"

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY GORE,
11 Oakley, Honiton, Devon.
January 21

OBITUARIES

NORMAN MacCAIG

Norman MacCaig, OBE, poet, died yesterday aged 85. He was born on November 14, 1910.

NORMAN MacCAIG was one of the most important Scottish poets of this century. Unlike his compatriot, Sorley MacLean, he was never tempted to experiment in Gaelic. Nor was he particularly avant-garde in his use of rhyme or metre. During certain parts of his writing career, indeed, he wrote in quite a conventional manner. But mostly, he worked a creative middle ground between the traditional and the experimental.

Like John Donne, his formative influence, he was essentially a love poet, but not just in the romantic or erotic sense. He also wrote about the environment he knew and loved best: Edinburgh, and the Scottish countryside around Assynt, in south-west Sutherland, where he spent every summer. He dug deep in search not just of his own roots but of common human roots. His poems evoked a world of water and stone, small lochs, city streets at night, and among other enthusiasms — "grass-hoppers, fishes, snails and me".

He was the epitome of the absent-minded poet. Once, travelling on a bus in Edinburgh, he was so lost in thought that he sat next to a pretty young woman without taking much notice of her. It was only after he got home that his amused daughter revealed that she had been the young woman in question.

Norman Alexander MacCaig was born in Edinburgh and educated at the Royal High School and at Edinburgh University. His first book of poems was *Far Cry*, published by Routledge (as were all his earlier works) in 1943. Before that, his only substantial appearance in print had been in the anthology *The White Horseman*, edited by his fellow Celts J. F. Hendry and Henry Treece. It was subtitled "prose and verse of the new apocalypse", and had been published in 1941.

It can be assumed that Herbert Read took a fatherly interest in these neo-Romantic effusions, for the poets of the "new apocalypse" seem to have derived some of their political or anti-political styles from his anarchism. Their poetical clothes, however, were cut in the modernist Dylan Thomas style. Thomas himself had a low opinion of it all, referring to the "apocalypse" and making dark jokes about not being able to "tell the wood from the Trece". MacCaig's nine poems in *The White Horseman* were no better or worse than most of the other contributions. He continued his apprenticeship in the cloned verse of



The Inward Eye, published in 1946. If the story had ended there, it would have been forgotten. MacCaig was, after all, 36 years old at the time of the publishing of *The Inward Eye*, and one could have assumed that his ways were set. A critical verdict then might have set him down as an incurable rhapsodist, a writer of incantatory rubbish. Times change, though, and poets grow up and recover from their first few bouts of language. After the Second World War — during which he was a conscientious objector — MacCaig was employed as a teacher in primary schools in Edinburgh. At the same time he worked away, refining the richness of his early outpourings, simplifying an almost irritable alertness of the senses in the interests of clearer communication. The poems in *Riding Lights* (1955) marked the emergence of a new poet: self under self, a pile of selves I stand.

Threaded on time, and with metaphoric hand
Lift the farm like a lid and see
Farm within farm, and in the centre, me.

He was, as one critic remarked, the man who put the me in metaphysics. But the early verbal surface, as thick as glue and only slightly less gelatinous, was gone for ever. *Riding Lights* and *The Sins of the Fathers* (published by Hogarth in 1957, as were all his subsequent publications) showed a tougher intellectual manner. These were confident, clever, rhetorical poems, committed to the thoroughly Donnesque notion that "hard feeling is true exercise for wit", and finding far-fetched ways to break straws with the best of them:

... that straw
That shows the way the wind
blows, from what start
To some, large ending in the
human heart.
The poems in these books, however intricately fashioned, never give a sense of insincerity, but they do tend to talk to themselves somewhat exclusively, posing a number of questions that are elegant rather than urgent. *Poem for a Goodbye* and *Gifts* stand as MacCaig's best work from this time. They were poems with a pressure of lived experience behind them, carefully patterned

shapes of sound and image where the very care seemed to test the gravity of what is being said. It was work like this that Edwin Muir was thinking of when he announced of MacCaig: "He is a real poet."

Six books followed during the 1950s: *A Common Grace* (1950), *A Round of Applause* (1952), *Messures* (1953), *Surroundings* (1956), *Rings on a Tree* (1958) and *A Man in My Position* (1959). Each book saw the poet growing less complicated, less ceremonious, less tense. The process looked like a gradual maturing, although it was not to everyone's taste. It was possible to suspect, for instance, that a poem like *The Men from Assynt*, originally commissioned by the BBC, represented a dilution of thoughts and feelings about landscape which would have been more stringently expressed in the days when the poet's musings were at least given backbone by the demands of end-stopping rhyme.

In other poems — for example *Numismatist*, *God in the Grass*, and the title poem of *A Man in My Position* — even musing dwindled to a single thread, and one extended image was asked to do all the work. Norman Cameron used to manage this kind of thing excellently, but in MacCaig's hands it sometimes had less of a concentric clarity than a slightly factitious air, as if of fancy circumscribed in an attempt to make it mean something extra. The last five lines of *Numismatist* could even be taken as a metaphorical description of the activity:

But see me now —
blackjacked medieval smalltime
troll
shaking gold coins in a bag
for the pinch of rich dust
left in the bottom.

MacCaig's "gold coins" — the counters and concepts of this poetry — had not lost their value. However, they did grow a bit smoother and he had to shake them harder and harder in the bag to get the required pinch.

In 1967 he gave up his schoolteaching to become the first holder of the Writing Fellowship at the University of Edinburgh. MacCaig proved immensely popular and successful in this capacity, and it was followed by another academic appointment in the University of Stirling. His *Selected Poems* appeared in 1971. It showed the poet's own view of his work to be in accord with the commonly held critical opinion that his progress had been a sort of gradual pining down.

Sometimes, as in a slender piece of whimsy such as *Flooded Mind*, a single metaphor is turned inside out or upside down and then made to do

the work of a poem, wandering down the page with a look of discovery which the actual language never quite reports.

This, though, is to criticise from the highest standards, a genuine poet who threatened briefly to be a 20th-century Donne in lines like these, from *Poem for a Goodbye*:

When you go through
My absence, which is all of you,
And clouds, or suns, no more can
be my sky.
My one dissembling will be all —
The inclusive lie
Of being this voice, this look, these
few feet tall.

In his later years MacCaig published less, particularly after the death in 1990 of his wife, Isabel, whom he had married in 1940. His *Collected Poems* (1988), republished in 1990 to mark his 80th birthday, was all the same a substantial volume, and several critics hailed him then as the greatest living Scottish poet, the natural successor to his old friend Hugh MacDiarmid.

MacCaig himself, while knowing his own worth, tended to be indifferent to praise and blame alike. It was typical of the man that on the eve of his 80th birthday he described on television his method of writing as just sitting down with a blank sheet of paper and letting his mind wander freely down the page, as he thought about places and friends. He liked to claim that it took him about as long to write a poem as to smoke a cigarette.

MacCaig was appointed OBE in 1979 and among other honours he was perhaps most pleased by having been made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1983. He spent all his adult life in Edinburgh, with the exception of the period at Stirling.

He was always his own man, and once declared in a poem called *Patriot*, my only country
is six feet high
and whether I love it or not
I'll die
for its independence.

In his person, MacCaig was tall, thin, graceful, quizzical, gentle. He could be sarcastically witty in conversation but his epigrams seemed like the prickles of a hedgehog — something useful to protect an essentially shy nature. Some of them, delivered in a snapping voice at a poetry reading or just as likely on a windy Edinburgh street corner on a chance meeting with a friend, deserve to be remembered as much as anything he wrote: "Whenever I hear the word gun I reach for my culture."

He is survived by a son and a daughter.

GILES PLAYFAIR



Giles Playfair, author and penal reformer, died in Paris on January 17 aged 85. He was born on September 27, 1910.

GILES PLAYFAIR was a writer and broadcaster whose work was principally related to the theatre and to penal reform. He was the son of Sir Nigel Playfair, the well known actor-manager and proprietor of the Lyric Theatre, Hammer-smith.

Brought up in the heart of theatrical and literary London in the 1920s, he counted among his godparents two of the most renowned stage stars of that time, Mrs Patrick Campbell and Henry Ainley. However, his father's determination that he should not follow in his own professional footsteps ensured that Playfair's involvement in the theatre in adult life was only peripheral.

Sent to school at Harrow, Giles William Playfair went up from there to Merton College, Oxford, in 1929. During his time at Oxford he enjoyed spectacular success — only perhaps rivalled by his predecessor by five years, Sir Giles Isham — in becoming editor of *Cherwell*, secretary of the Oxford University Dramatic Society and treasurer of the Oxford Union. Many of his exploits are still remembered — above all, the occasion on which he took the Hollywood star and actress Tallulah Bankhead up in a balloon.

But his remaining contemporaries will also recall his performance in the Basil Dean production of *Flecker's Hassan*, where he played the title role opposite Peggy Ashcroft and Thelma Houston. Where he was unlucky was in his controversial run for the OUDS presidency in which he narrowly failed to defeat the official candidate, George Devine, later to become the hero of the Royal Court. It was as a result of this thwarted bid to run OUDS that Playfair went on to found the Merton Floats, the college drama society which exists to this day.

On coming down from Oxford, he was called to the Bar in 1934, but finding the financial rewards somewhat meagre, prudently secured an industrial position in Manchester. During the immediate prewar years, he supplemented this job in industry with being the local dramatic critic for the *Daily Express*. He also at this time published the first two of his many books: *My Father's Son* (1937), a biography of his father, who had died in 1934, and *Kean* (1939), still considered to be the standard work on the 19th-century tragedian.

Although he volunteered in 1939, poor eyesight prevented active service in the Second World War. In December 1941, however, he was sent to Singapore to run the Malay

Broadcasting Corporation, escaping three days before the capture of the island by the Japanese to the United States via Australia. In America he worked for a branch of British Intelligence. His earlier experience is described in his journal *Singapore Goes Off The Air* (1943).

He stayed in the United States after the war, first as Professor of Drama at the University of North Carolina and then in a similar capacity at Williams College, Massachusetts, where he also produced a number of plays at the Adams Memorial Theatre in Williamstown. It was here that he met his second wife, the birth of his first son, when he was already well into his forties, seemed to reawaken his as yet dormant feelings and shortly afterwards he and his wife returned to England.

He immediately became active as a commentator for a variety of newspapers and weeklies as well as broadcasting frequently on the radio (he was one of the regular presenters of a Saturday morning BBC programme of the time called *The Weekly World*).

A lifelong Liberal and the advocate of often unpopular causes, he became interested in penal reform, publishing *The Offenders and Crime*, *Punishment and Cure* (both with Derrick Sington), and *The Punitive Obsession* — all three of which argued against punishment as a successful deterrent to crime. His was also one of the few voices raised against the Mountbatten report on prison security commissioned by Roy Jenkins as Home Secretary in the wake of George Blake's escape from Wormwood Scrubs in 1966.

Although hampered by a serious stroke in 1972, which curtailed his ability to broadcast, he continued to write several more books and various articles, as well as letters to *The Times*. An artist to the extent that he was always highly self-critical of his work, he was, nevertheless, very self-disciplined, even Victorian, in some of his attitudes, regarding, for example, even the resort to a mortgage as evidence of a profligate lifestyle.

Despite ill-health he remained active in the last 15 years, often, to the amazement of his friends, travelling to most corners of the world and lunching frequently at the Garrick where, having joined the club in 1933, he was the senior member. In his later years he became a vigorous opponent of the admission of women — gloomily predicting that it was eventually bound to happen but boldly asserting that, when it did, "the Garrick Club, as I have known it, will finally have ceased to exist".

Giles Playfair is survived by his wife Ann, whom he married in 1946, and by a son, a daughter and two stepchildren.

ANN BLAICKIE

Ann Blaickie, co-founder of the Co-Workers of Mother Teresa, died on January 14 aged 79. She was born on December 9, 1916.

AN indefatigable bearer of Mother Teresa's spiritual message, Ann Blaickie earned international affection and regard for her selfless work among the poor. "It is not the magnitude of the action which is important," she would say, "but the love which we put into it." Such was her dedication to her work that Mother Teresa herself, the nun whom she had befriended long before the rest of the world had acclaimed her work, was to describe her

as her "other self". In 1989 the Vatican awarded Ann Blaickie the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice medal.

The daughter of an Anglican clergyman, Zaida Ann Simons (as she was before she married) was born in London and educated at Atherley School, Southampton, and Froebel College, Rochester. She then took a job as a teacher in a London prep school where she numbered Edward Kennedy among her pupils.

During the war she served as a junior commander in the ATS with the anti-aircraft batteries in southern England and Wales. Throughout those years she corresponded with

John Blaickie, the brother of her closest friend, whom she had met when she was 19. In order to join him in China, in late 1946 she travelled by flying boat as far as India, making the final stages of the journey in an unpressurised light aircraft. They were married in Shanghai in January 1947. However, two years later the Chinese revolution brought the young couple briefly back to London before John Blaickie took up a position as a lawyer for the British-American Tobacco Company in Calcutta.

It was there that in 1954 Ann Blaickie first met Mother Teresa. The circumstances were characteristically pragmatic.

Ann Blaickie had for some time been working in a mission charity shop, until, having become too heavily pregnant to reach the bottom drawers, she felt she must "do her bit" elsewhere. A newspaper article, describing how the then scarcely known Mother Teresa had rescued an abandoned baby from a dustbin, inspired Ann Blaickie to offer her assistance.

Involved at first in meeting the practical requirements of Mother Teresa's young congregation of the Missionaries of Charity, Ann Blaickie enlisted the support of other European helpers, providing food, clothing and toys and raising vital funds. She organised the



first campaign "to touch a leper with compassion" and, a gifted speaker, she became Mother Teresa's spokeswoman at the opening of the first leprosy dispensary at Tilagarh in 1959.

In September 1960 the Blaickie family moved to Cobham, Surrey. Within days Ann Blaickie was once more engaged in work for Mother Teresa. The need for practical support increased as the Missionaries of Charity foundations spread beyond the boundaries of India. Together with the broadcaster and writer, Malcolm Muggeridge, Blaickie helped to raise public awareness and, as Mother Teresa became increasingly insistent on the spiritual role of lay people who wished to support her work, so too did Blaickie.

Together with Mother Teresa, she drew up a constitution which would bind their co-workers not only in a spirit of service but also in a spirit of

prayer. On March 26, 1969, they went together to Rome to present this constitution to Pope Paul VI. It received his blessing.

Ann Blaickie had converted to Roman Catholicism before her marriage, but she brought an ecumenical vision to the International Association of Co-Workers, emphasising the importance of excluding no one on the grounds of creed, nationality or class.

In order to co-ordinate the activities of co-workers throughout the world, Mother Teresa appointed Anne Blaickie her international link and it was in this capacity that, after the death of her husband in 1974, she travelled to more than 60 countries — ranging from Iceland to Singapore. Staying with local people, she worked to spread (sometimes in French) the message of Mother Teresa. The spiritual poverty of the West, she maintained, was a far more complex problem to solve than the material poverty of the so-called Third World.

In 1988 Ann Blaickie retired as international link for the co-workers, yet she continued to dedicate her life to others. Her home in Woking, Surrey, was open to all, particularly to the young who came to seek her advice before leaving for far distant countries to help the Missionaries of Charity.

In her latter years Ann Blaickie suffered from Alzheimer's disease. But she remained an active member of her local church.

She is survived by a son and two daughters.

PERSONAL COLUMN

TICKETS FOR SALE

ALL AVAILABLE: Phoenix, all seats, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th, 58th, 59th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 63rd, 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, 73rd, 74th, 75th, 76th, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th, 86th, 87th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd, 94th, 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 100th, 101st, 102nd, 103rd, 104th, 105th, 106th, 107th, 108th, 109th, 110th, 111th, 112th, 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, 118th, 119th, 120th, 121st, 122nd, 123rd, 124th, 125th, 126th, 127th, 128th, 129th, 130th, 131st, 132nd, 133rd, 134th, 135th, 136th, 137th, 138th, 139th, 140th, 141st, 142nd, 143rd, 144th, 145th, 146th, 147th, 148th, 149th, 150th, 151st, 152nd, 153rd, 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Right of retention in contract

Bank of East Asia Ltd v Scottish Enterprise and Another

Before Lord Jauncey of Tullicettle, Lord Browne-Wilkinson, Lord Mustill, Lord Slynn of Hadley and Lord Woolf

[Speeches January 18]

The right of retention in Scots law, that is, the right to resist demand for payment or performance under a contract until some contractual obligation has been performed, might be operated against corresponding obligations enforceable but not in respect of obligations duly performed.

Accordingly, the defendants were entitled to withhold payment for work done only in respect of loss and damage caused by negligent work prior to the due date for payment and not in respect of loss and damage caused by failure to complete the works after that date.

The House of Lords dismissed an appeal by the defendants, Scottish Enterprise and Stanley Miller (Scotland) Ltd, from the Court of Appeal (Sir Donald Nicholls, Vice-Chancellor, Lord Justice Leggatt and Lord Justice Henry) on February 8, 1994, which had dismissed the appeal from Judge Quentin Edwards, QC, sitting as an official referee, on June 19, 1992.

Mr James Drummond Young, QC, of the Scots Bar, and Mr Sebastian Neville-Clarke for the defendants; Mr Neil Davidson, QC, of the Scots Bar, and Mr Stephen Furst, QC, for the plaintiffs, the Bank of East Asia Ltd.

LORD JAUNCEY said that in 1989 the Scottish Development Agency ("SDA"), now Scottish Enterprise, had entered into a contract, governed by Scots law, with Stanley Miller for the construction by them of factory units.

Payment was initially to be made in monthly stages, but subsequently it had been agreed that no instalment was to be paid until May 15, 1990, Stanley Miller to make their own arrangements for interim funding.

Those arrangements had been made with the plaintiff bank and had involved by way of security an assignment by Stanley Miller to the bank of the full benefit of all sums due and payable by SDA under the contract.

On May 15, 1990 the sum due and payable had been £416,964.72 and it was accepted that prior to that date work had been carried out negligently with resultant loss and damage to SDA of £168,512.40.

By May 29, Stanley Miller had been insolvent, administrative receivers had been appointed and work on the site had ceased. As a

result of Stanley Miller's failure to complete, SDA had suffered further loss and damage and also become entitled to liquidated and ascertained damages under clause 24 of the contract.

SDA had made no payment to the bank. It was accepted that they were entitled to withhold payment of the £168,512.40 due in respect of negligent work performed prior to May 15, 1990, but the question for decision was whether they were entitled to withhold payment of the balance from £416,964.72 pending quantification of their claim for damages arising out of Stanley Miller's failure to complete the works after that date.

The judge had held that the law of Scotland was authoritative in relation to the right of retention. He found that the right of retention was a right of the contractor to withhold payment for work done only in respect of loss and damage caused by negligent work prior to the due date for payment and not in respect of loss and damage caused by failure to complete the works after that date.

Mr Drummond Young accepted that *Redpath* was indistinguishable on its facts but submitted that it had been wrongly decided and that Lord Justice-Clerk Wheatley had misunderstood what Lord Benholme had meant by "contemporaneous" in *Johnston v Robertson* (1861) 23 D 646, 650. The key to the problem lay, he said, in the well known principle of mutuality of contract whereby A who has failed to perform his part of a contract could not insist on B performing his.

"Compensation" in Scots law, was the term used to describe the right to set one claim against another, had no application in applying the general principles enunciated by Lord Justice-Clerk Wheatley in *Redpath*.

An exception to the rule that both debts must be liquid arose: "where the liquidated claim arises out of the same contract as the debt which is sued for, and where the enforcement of immediate payment would result in enabling the pursuer to obtain satisfaction of his claim under the contract when he has not implemented the obligation of which that claim is the counterpart." *Glasgow, The Law of Contract* (2nd edn) (1929) p627.

That exception of retention, however, had a more limited effect than compensation: see per Lord Justice-Clerk Wheatley in *Scottish Widows Fund* (1864) 2 M 595, 607.

In *Johnston v Robertson* Lord

Benholme had said: "The plea of the defender is based mainly on the rule of the law of Scotland, that one party to a mutual contract, in which there are mutual stipulations, cannot insist on having his claim under the contract satisfied, unless he is prepared to satisfy the corresponding and contemporaneous claims of the other party to the contract."

"I think the rule of law, that an illiquid claim cannot be set off against a liquid claim, does not apply to such a case; and that, at all events, if the one claim be liquid, and the other party illiquid, yet contemporaneous, the rule should suffer some qualification or relaxation if the claims arise under one contract. The counter claims must be contemporaneous, for, if not, the rule would apply."

Much argument in the House of Lords had been directed to Lord Benholme's use of the word "contemporaneous". Did it refer to the time when the claims arose or merely to the time when the withholder was sued or tabled the defence as in the case of compensation for liquid debts?

Mr Drummond Young argued that retention was merely an example of the principle of mutuality and that it operated as a defence from the time that payment became due until at least the date of raising of an action if not until decree.

Mr Davidson submitted that retention was no more than a remedy of self-help and that contemporaneity of obligations had to be looked at when it was first operated and not when an action was raised.

His Lordship did not consider that the authorities warranted so broad a proposition as that any material breach by one party to a contract necessarily disentitled him from enforcing any and every obligation due by the other party.

In applying the general principles enunciated by Lord Justice-Clerk Wheatley in *Redpath* v *McLean* & Co (1874) 1 R 730, 738 regard must be had to the terms of the contract in question.

In *Pegler v Northern Agricultural Implement and Foundry Co Ltd* (1877) 4 R 435, 443, Lord Shand had said: "I venture to think the sound principle is... that if the defence be founded on an obligation fairly arising out of the contract, and the performance of which is reciprocal and contemporaneous, it is exigible or prestable at the same time with the obligation which is the foundation of the action, then the defence is good."

If Lord Benholme's use of "contemporaneous" in *Johnston v Robertson* had been intended to be the same as that of Lord Shand there would be no doubt that

Redpath had been correctly decided. Lord Shand had clearly envisaged not the totality of obligations due under a contract but, rather, specific obligations that were the direct counterpart of other obligations due under it.

His Lordship did not think that Lord Justice-Clerk Wheatley in *Turnbull v McLean* had intended to state that each and every obligation by one party to a mutual contract was necessarily and invariably the counterpart of each and every obligation by the other. It had to be a matter of circumstances.

Thus in a contract to be performed by both sides in stages the counter-obligation and consideration for payment of stage one was the completion of the work for that stage conform to contract.

When Lord Benholme in *Johnston v Robertson* had referred to "contemporaneous and contemporaneous claims" he had had in mind counter-obligations that were, as Lord Shand had put it in *Pegler*, "exigible or prestable at the same time".

It followed that retention might be operated against corresponding obligations prestable but unfulfilled but had no relevance to obligations fully performed.

Lord Justice-Clerk Wheatley had properly understood *Johnston v Robertson*, and *Redpath* had been correctly decided. The judge and the Court of Appeal had reached the right conclusion.

Lord Browne-Wilkinson, Lord Mustill, Lord Slynn and Lord Woolf agreed.

Solicitors: Sprecher Griev, Mishcon de Reys.

National and Provincial Building Society v Lloyd

Before Lord Justice Neill and Mr Justice Bennett

[Judgment December 8]

Section 36 of the Administration of Justice Act 1970, as amended by section 8 of the Administration of Justice Act 1973, empowered a court in the exercise of its discretion, to suspend an order for the possession of mortgaged property, if there was sufficient evidence to lead the court to the conclusion that the mortgagor was likely to be able to pay any sums due under the mortgage within a reasonable period. The question of a reasonable period was a matter for the court in each individual case.

The Court of Appeal so stated allowing an appeal by the plaintiff, the National and Provincial Building Society, against the decision of Judge McKinnay who, at Bournemouth County Court on May 15, 1995, had suspended an order for possession of mortgaged property made by a district judge against the defendant, Geoffrey William Lloyd.

Mr Ali Malek for the plaintiff; Mr Patrick Hamlin for the defendant.

LORD JUSTICE NEILL said that the judge concluded that section 36 of the 1970 Act, as amended by section 8 of the 1973 Act, applied to the present case. Against the decision the plaintiff appealed. The plaintiff made two main submissions.

First, it was said that the defendant was not allowed for the sale of a property which was the subject of a mortgage was limited so that only a short time

was allowed for the sale to be completed because such a sale, in effect, destroyed the security.

Second, it was said that on the facts of the present case, there was not sufficient evidence to have entitled the judge to make the finding that she did.

In support of the first submission, the plaintiff argued that the authorities established that an order for possession of mortgaged property should only be deferred to allow a mortgagor time to sell such property where the prospects of an early sale were best served by allowing a mortgagor time and, furthermore, the authorities established that any such deferral should be short.

It was true that both at common law and in the more recent cases

since the enactment of section 36 of the 1970 Act, it had been said that in the case of the sale of mortgaged property the adjournment or suspension which would be allowed would only be allowed if a sale would take place within a short period of time.

His Lordship did not understand that there was any rule of law to that effect. Accordingly, if there were, in a hypothetical case, clear evidence that the completion of the sale of a property, perhaps by piecemeal disposal, could take place in six or nine months or even a year, his Lordship could see no reason why a court could not come to the conclusion in the exercise of its discretion under section 36 and section 8 that, to use the words of section 36 "the mortgagor was

likely to be able within a reasonable period to pay any sums due under the mortgage".

The question of a "reasonable period" would best be asked for the court in the individual case.

As to the second submission, the question was whether there was sufficient evidence to lead a court to the conclusion that the mortgagor would be able within a reasonable period to pay the sums due under the mortgage? His Lordship had come to the conclusion that the evidence available to him in those circumstances, his Lordship would allow the appeal.

Mr Justice Bennett agreed.

Solicitors: Dibb Lupton Broomhead, Leeds; Heald Nickinson, Camberley.

Applying guiding principles in tax appeals

Carvill v Inland Revenue Commissioners
Before Sir John Vinelott
[Judgment December 21]

In tax appeals, principles existed to guide the court in exercising its discretion to remit a case stated to the special or general commissioners for amendment. But certain practical considerations had to be borne in mind in applying those principles to the facts of any given case.

Sir John Vinelott, sitting as a judge of the Chancery Division, so stated in a reserved judgment in which he set out the relevant principles and his practical considerations before concluding that an application by the taxpayer, Mr Rory Kerr Carvill, to remit a case stated by a special commissioner (Mr T. H. K. Everett) went far beyond the proper invocation of the court's jurisdiction to remit a case to clarify obscure or ambiguous findings of fact or to make further findings necessary for the proper disposal of his appeal.

Mr Andrew Thornhill, QC and Mr Giles Goodfellow for the taxpayer; Mr Alan Moses, QC and Mr Rabinder Singh for the Crown.

HIS LORDSHIP said that section 739 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 was designed to counter tax avoidance by individuals ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom who transferred assets overseas.

The appeal was against the commissioner's determination that the taxpayer had failed to bring himself within either of the escape routes in section 740 of the Act by establishing that the purpose of avoiding tax liability had not been one of the purposes for his effecting

a share exchange and that he had failed to show that a share transfer had been a bona fide commercial transaction not designed to avoid liability to tax.

In an appeal by case stated under section 56 of the Taxes Management Act 1970 the court had jurisdiction on the application by either party to remit the case stated to the commissioners for amendment.

The principles which should guide the court in exercising its jurisdiction were summarised by Mr Justice Scott in *Consolidated Goldfields plc v IRC* (1990) STC 357, 360.

Thus (i) the findings of fact were for the commissioners; (ii) the parties were entitled to expect that the commissioners would in the case stated make findings covering the matters relevant to the arguments to be adduced on the appeal; and (iii) if a request was made for a case to be remitted for additional findings the applicant had to show that they would be material to some sensible argument, reasonably open on the evidence that had been adduced and not inconsistent with findings already made.

Three practical considerations that were implicit in those principles should be added and were to be borne in mind in applying them to the facts of any given case.

1 It was the usual practice for commissioners to transmit to the High Court with a case stated copies of any documents proved or admitted before them with a copy of any agreed note of any oral evidence. If not transmitted it was open to the court to call for them.

The judge hearing the appeal could be referred to those documents and notes for the purpose of amplifying the case stated. Nothing

was gained therefore by remitting a case solely for the purpose of adding material which could be obtained from the documents or notes of evidence.

2 It was for the court to decide on the hearing of the appeal whether a given conclusion followed as a matter of logical or practical necessity from the findings of fact by the commissioners or whether those findings of fact were inconsistent with their conclusions.

No purpose was served by remitting a case for the commissioners to spell out what was implied or followed as a matter of logical or practical necessity from their findings and conclusions.

3 The issue that most frequently came before the court on a case stated was whether an inference could or could not be drawn from the primary facts adduced or found by the commissioners.

It was for the commissioners as the fact-finding tribunal to say whether any clear pattern or picture emerged in the light of various primary facts, and in doing so they had necessarily to decide which facts they found relevant and what relative weight should be given to them.

The court could interfere only if it could be said that the commissioners' conclusion was an impossible one.

It would be wrong to remit a case for the commissioners to inquire which of the facts proved or admitted they considered to be relevant or irrelevant to their conclusion, just as it would be wrong to ask them to say what, if any, weight they gave to the facts which they did consider to be relevant.

Solicitors: Slaughter & May; Solicitor of Inland Revenue.

Pension disputes go ahead

Cocking v Prudential Assurance Co Ltd and associated entities

The review of pension transactions authorised by the Securities and Investments Board to be carried out by pension providers following allegations of pensions mis-selling was not an arbitration nor an alternative dispute resolution so as to render the pursuit of a court action by aggrieved customers an abuse of process within Order 18, rule 19 of the Rules of the Supreme Court: nor did it entitle the pension providers to be granted a stay of such proceedings pursuant to section 49(3) of the Supreme Court Act 1981.

Judge Raymond Jack, QC, sitting as a judge of the Queen's Bench Division in Bristol, so held on January 8, dismissing applications by various pension companies to stay six separate actions brought against them by the plaintiff's alleging that they had been wrongly advised to take out personal pension schemes rather than being members of occupational pension schemes.

HIS LORDSHIP said that the review was an administrative process carried out by the relevant companies to identify who might have been improperly advised by them and to offer redress.

The process was not something set out by statute or agreement and the plaintiffs had no legal obligation to submit to it. It was plain that the applications were outside any of the established situations in which an action might be stayed.

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NEWS

Blair fights to mend Labour split

Tony Blair was struggling to contain the most serious breakdown of discipline in his party since he became leader after he staked his authority on keeping Harriet Harman in his frontbench team.

Labour is now split at all levels over whether she should remain as Shadow Health Secretary. Mr Blair has given her his backing but his deputy, John Prescott, is unhappy about her decision to send her son to a grammar school and scarcely more pleased about Mr Blair's support for her. Page 1

Granada wins control of Forte

Granada sealed victory in the £3.8 billion battle for control of Forte, ending the Forte family's 60-year reign at the hotels, roadside cafe and restaurant company they founded. Granada secured the backing of 67 per cent of shareholders. Pages 1, 6

Arms pressure

Britain will come under pressure today to drop its insistence that the IRA must begin to disarm before all-party talks when the International Commission on Terrorist Arms reports that the demand is impractical. Page 1

'Feel-good' promise

Kenneth Clarke predicted the return of the "feel-good" factor this year as he set the stage for a special Cabinet session today devoted to rebuilding Conservative fortunes. Page 2

Divorce Bill move

The Lord Chancellor has agreed to extend the "cooling off" period for divorcing couples to allow more time to agree arrangements for their children and meet criticisms from peers. Page 2

Fairytale deal

The family of Enid Blyton, one of the world's greatest children's authors whose centenary falls next year, has sold the copyright to her books for £13 million. Page 3

Town's inheritance

A businessman who died last November has left £10 million to be spent on worthy causes in Scarborough, the North Yorkshire town he loved. Page 3

Girl's 'husband' held

Musa Komegaa, 18, a Turkish waiter who "married" a 13-year-old British girl, was charged with rape and held in jail. Page 5

Two more staff leave the Princess

Two more employees of the Princess of Wales left their jobs as she began the search for a new private secretary to replace Patrick Jephson. The Princess now has only two secretarial staff after the resignation of Nicky Cockell, 32, who had helped Mr Jephson. Stephen Davis, 31, the Princess's regular chauffeur, also announced that he was leaving. Page 1

Rail safety crisis

British Rail was forced to withdraw nearly 100 London commuter trains suspected of having metal fatigue, forcing tens of thousands of passengers to rush into half the normal number of carriages. Page 7

Careful Britain

Britons are cutting spending, clearing debts and putting spare cash in the bank, says a financial survey. Page 8

Speaker in waiting

Philippe Séguin, Speaker of the French National Assembly and Maastricht critic, has insisted that he does not want to be Prime Minister, while discreetly manoeuvring himself into a position to take over. Page 10

Bandit on film

Bandit Queen, a film about India's most famous outlaw, is about to open in Delhi, where the low-caste, illiterate former gang leader lives. Page 11

Assassin's boast

Yigal Amir, a 25-year-old law student, admitted that he assassinated Yitzhak Rabin at a peace rally last year. He said that he had no regrets. Page 12

Meeting the press

America will witness the extraordinary spectacle of its First Lady entering a courthouse on Friday through scrums of journalists and cameramen. Page 13



The biggest brick-built underground reservoir in Europe being drained for inspection at Honor Oak, south London, yesterday.

BUSINESS

Bearings: The administrators have issued writs against the bank's auditors in the UK and in Singapore, and are claiming up to £1 billion in damages. Page 25

Big leap: Farnell Electronics, the electronic components distributor, is acquiring Premier Industrial Corporation of the US in a deal worth \$2.8 billion (£1.85 billion). Page 25

Economy: Kenneth Clarke forecast improved economic growth even though the latest business survey showed manufacturing activity to be sluggish. Page 25

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index fell 19.2 to 3735.0. Sterling rose from £2.9 to £3.0 after a fall from £1.5147 to £1.5145 but a rise from DM2.2354 to DM2.2366. Page 25

SPORT

Football: Blackburn refused Ireland permission to interview Kenny Dalglish, the favourite among a shortlist of four to succeed Jack Charlton as manager. Page 48

Crickets: Australia agreed to take part in the World Cup despite concerns over security arrangements after threats were made to their players. Page 48

Rugby union: France will decide tomorrow the disciplinary action to be taken against Richard Dourthe after he admitted kicking Ben Clarke, of England, on the head. Page 48

Tennis: Chanda Rubin reached the semi-finals of the Australian Open when she beat Arantxa Sánchez Vicario in a record-breaking 3hr 33min match. Page 48

Drake on trial: A big National Maritime Museum exhibition to mark the 400th anniversary of Sir Francis Drake's death reopens the debate about whether Drake was a hero or a pirate. Page 37

Kremer's nights: One of the world's greatest violinists has devised a series of London concerts to show off some of his instrument's less known repertoire. Page 35

College capers: Christopher Frayling is expected to become the new head of the Royal College of Art. Does he want the job? Page 35

Mimed mockery: Ralf Ralk, two brothers who form a brilliant double-act, have staged a sharp and refreshing parody of international diplomacy as part of the London Mime Festival. Page 35

Heart-throb: Omar Sharif talks to Mary Riddell about women, flings and his passion for bridge and horses. Page 14

Cultural differences: American women are pushy and ambitious, British women get embarrassed, says Kimberly Fortier. Page 15

Sensitive moments: Who would be willing to become press aide to the Princess of Wales? Page 23

Welcome trends: There were signs of life in the housing market over Christmas and they have continued into January. Page 21

Higher costs: Companies may pay more for electricity and gas — depending on their area. Page 30

Not only parents but all residents should be livid that children — who have no say where they live — are being forced to attend schools where they feel in peril. — *Washington Post*

The Russian president has earned US support and should continue to get it as long as he embraces democratic goals. But Yeltsin won't last forever. He may not even last till summer. — *USA Today*

IN THE TIMES

AT THE MOVIES

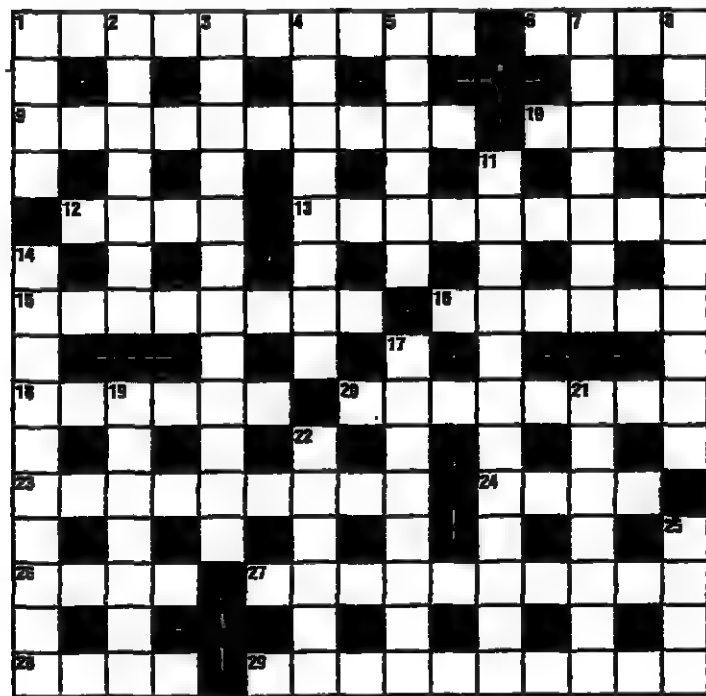
Geoff Brown on Whitney Houston and the sisters, Pacino and De Niro

in Heat, and Almodóvar's Flower of my Secret



Geoff Brown on Whitney Houston and the sisters, Pacino and De Niro in *Heat*, and Almodóvar's *Flower of my Secret*

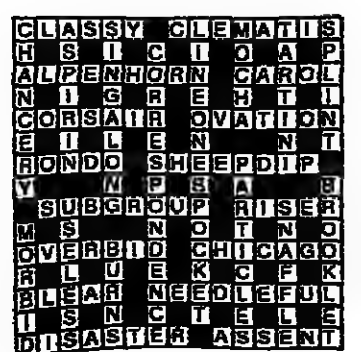
THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,072



ACROSS

- 1 Pleasant Democrat potentially a senator? (10).
- 6 Eat out in estaminet cheaply (4).
- 9 Filter from by-pass approaching a hill (10).
- 10 Comfortable with arms folded back (4).
- 12 Island bird's heading off (4).
- 13 Hoodigan appears to hand out harsh treatment (5,4).
- 15 Mistletoe held up by host, for example (8).
- 16 Farewell excessively drawn out (2,4).
- 18 Wild animal's back at home, first approaching stream (6).
- 20 Having a proper hearing, about to take off (8).
- 23 Hunt to collect drinks for marketing promotion (5,4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,071



- 24 Chills South with lead of diamonds (4).
- 26 Gory mayhem in wild party (4).
- 27 Liberal president objected, holding similar views (4,6).
- 28 Tribes enjoyed in the nursery (4).
- 29 Time for our revolution to succeed here and now (7,3).

DOWN

- 1 Mug's in arrears, without a penny (4).
- 2 He works a bit, using metal in job, right? (7).
- 3 Affectively fashionable person disturbed her host in the end (7-5).
- 4 Eagerness to construct a real city out east (8).
- 5 Show promise and seek a reference (4,2).
- 7 Fruit taste the Spanish love (7).
- 8 Outstanding features of Oxford Street illuminations (10).
- 11 He speculatively considers the Creation, I recollected (12).
- 14 Killjoy finds profit suppressing drink (10).
- 17 Partiality is a failing (8).
- 19 Decline to mock scapegoat (4,3).
- 21 Changed over after a mile (7).
- 22 Weapon gunners used, covering landing area (6).
- 25 Little boy in a whirl (4).

Times Two Crossword, page 43

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North West	708
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West Yorkshire	710
North Yorkshire	711
East Yorkshire	712
North Lincolnshire	713
North Nottinghamshire	714
North Derbyshire	715
North Leicestershire	716
North Rutland	717
North Cambridgeshire	718
North Suffolk	719
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North Hampshire	723
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North Cheshire	758
North Lancashire	759
North Merseyside	760
North Wirral	761
North Wirral	762
North Wirral	763
North Wirral	764
North Wirral	765
North Wirral	766
North Wirral	767
North Wirral	768
North Wirral	769
North Wirral	770

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday's highest day temperature (°C) and lowest night temperature (°C) for the 24 hours ending 23.59 on 23/1/96.

London	10.0	4.0
East of London	10.0	4.0
West of London	10.0	4.0
South East	10.0	4.0
West Midlands	10.0	4.0
East Midlands	10.0	4.0
North East	10.0	4.0
North West	10.0	4.0
Yorkshire & the Humber	10.0	4.0
West Yorkshire	10.0	4.0
North Yorkshire	10.0	4.0
East Yorkshire	10.0	4.0
North Lincolnshire	10.0	4.0
North Nottinghamshire	10.0	4.0
North Derbyshire	10.0	4.0
North Leicestershire	10.0	4.0
North Rutland	10.0	4.0
North Cambridgeshire	10.0	4.0
North Suffolk	10.0	4.0
North Essex	10.0	4.0
North Kent	10.0	4.0
North Surrey	10.0	4.0
North Hampshire	10.0	4.0
North Devon	10.0	4.0
North Cornwall	10.0	4.0
North Wales	10.0	4.0
North Shropshire	10.0	4.0
North Cheshire	10.0	4.0
North Lancashire	10.0	4.0
North Merseyside	10.0	4.0
North Wirral	10.0	4.0
North Wirral	10.0	4.0
North Wirral	10.0	4.0
North Wirral	10.0	4.0
North Wirral	10.0	4.0
North Wirral	10.0	4.0
North Wirral	10.0	4.0
North Wirral	10.0	4.0
North Wirral	10.0	4.0
North Wirral	10.0	4.0

E England, Central N, NE

England, Central N, NE England, Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee: cloudy, sleet and snow flurries at times. Wind east, mainly moderate. Cold. Max 2C (36F).

Channel Isles, SW England, S Wales: cloudy, rain dying out. Wind east or south-east, moderate. Max 5-7C (41-45F).

N Wales, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll, NW Scotland, N Ireland: cloudy, some brighter intervals. Isolated sleet or snow showers. Wind east, moderate, fresh at times. Max 4C (39F).

Aberdeen, Central Highlands, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: cloudy, sleet and snow showers. Wind east, moderate or fresh. Max 2-4C (36-39F).

Outlook: snow showers in the east and south, brighter in the west.

E England, Central N, NE

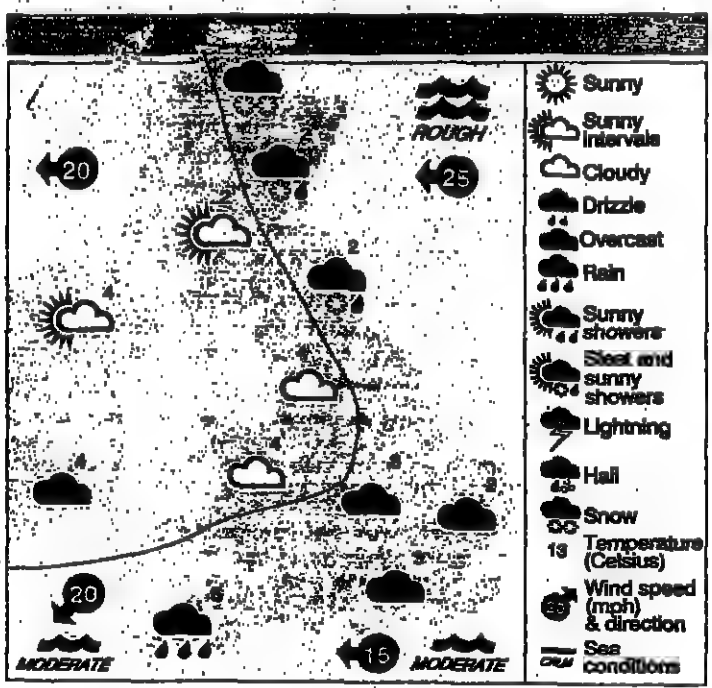
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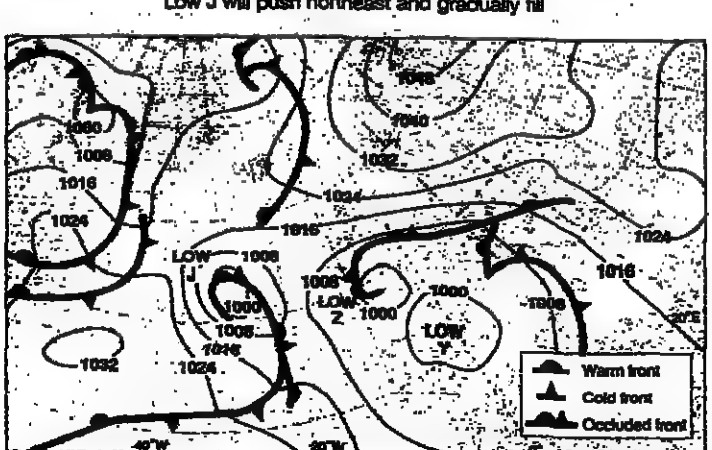
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Outlook: snow showers in the east and south, brighter in the west.



Low Y will drift east and lose its identity. Low Z will sink slowly south and fill. Low J will push northeast and gradually fill.



Low Y will drift east and lose its identity. Low Z will sink slowly south and fill. Low J will push northeast and gradually fill.

TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT	TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
London Bridge	4.10	7.3	4.41	7.5	London Bridge	4.10	7.3	4.41	7.5
Abbeville	3.53	6.6	3.55	6.6	Abbeville	3.53	6.6	3.55	6.6
Ammanford	9.50	14.2	10.10	13.6	Ammanford	9.50	14.2	10.10	13.6
Belfast	1.24	3.5	1.25	3.6	Belfast	1.24	3.5	1.25	3.6
Cardiff	9.41	12.8	9.42	12.9	Cardiff	9.41	12.8	9.42	12.9
Doncaster	8.30	5.7	8.54	5.4	Doncaster	8.30	5.7	8.54	5.4
Dover	1.17	3.8	1.42	6.7	Dover	1.17	3.8	1.42	6.7
Edinburgh	1.17	4.0	2.10	4.3	Edinburgh	1.17	4.0	2.10	4.3
Falmouth	7.54	5.4	8.13	4.9	Falmouth	7.54	5.4	8.13	4.9
Glasgow	3.01	3.5	3.14	3.9	Glasgow	3.01	3.5	3.14	3.9
Harwich	2.00	4.2	2.30	4.2	Harwich	2.00	4.2	2.30	4.2
Haywards	0.39	5.6	12.55	8.5	Haywards	0.39	5.6	12.55	8.5
Hull (Humber)	8.52	7.6	8.57	8.0	Hull (Humber)	8.52	7.6	8.57	8.0
Reading	8.28	10.1	8.57	9.4	Reading	8.28	10.1	8.57	9.4
Sheffield	6.40	6.8	6.58	7.1	Sheffield	6.40	6.8	6.58	7.1

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TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT	TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
London 4.35 pm to 7.50 am	4.35	7.50	4.35	7.50	London 4.35 pm to 7.50 am	4.35	7.50	4.35	7.50
Edinburgh 4.35 pm to 6.21 am	4.35	6.21	4.35	6.21	Edinburgh 4.35 pm to 6.21 am	4.35	6.21	4.35	6.21
Manchester 4.35 pm to 8.06 am	4.35	8.06	4.35	8.06	Manchester 4.35 pm to 8.06 am	4.35	8.06	4.35	8.06
Plymouth 5.01 pm to 8.08 am	5.01	8.08	5.01	8.08	Plymouth 5.01 pm to 8.08 am	5.01	8.08	5.01	8.08

First quarter January 22.

First quarter January 22.	AM	HT	PM	HT	First quarter January 22.	AM	HT	PM	HT
London 4.35 pm to 7.50 am	4.35	7.50	4.35	7.50	London 4.35 pm to 7.50 am	4.35	7.50	4.35	7.50
Edinburgh 4.35 pm to 6.21 am	4.35	6.21	4.35	6.21	Edinburgh 4.35 pm to 6.21 am	4.35	6.21	4.35	6.21
Manchester 4.35 pm to 8.06 am	4.35	8.06	4.35	8.06	Manchester 4.35 pm to 8.06 am	4.35	8.06	4.35	8.06
Plymouth 5.01 pm to 8.08 am	5.01	8.08	5.01	8.08	Plymouth 5.01 pm to 8.08 am	5.01	8.08	5.01	8.08

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Drake sails home in triumph in a new exhibition

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Teenager who ran a champion into the ground

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Property 38

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 24 1996

Barings administrators sue auditors for up to £1bn

By PATRICIA TEHAN
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THE administrators of the holding company of Barings, the merchant bank that collapsed in February last year, have issued writs against the bank's auditors in the UK and in Singapore, and are claiming up to £1 billion in damages.

Nigel Hamilton, Alan Bloom and Maggie Mills, partners in the accountancy firm Ernst & Young and joint administrators of Barings, started proceedings in the High Court in London yesterday against Coopers & Lybrand in London and

in Singapore and against Deloitte & Touche in Singapore.

The administrators refused to comment on the size of the claim for damages other than to say that it is "substantial", and that the precise amount would be the subject of expert opinion in due course.

They are believed to intend to seek the expert opinion of merchant banks to find out how much Barings would have been worth if it had not been forced out of business. City estimates put this figure at up to £1 billion.

The claim is "in respect of alleged negligence in the conduct of audits

for certain years between 1991 and 1994".

A spokesman for Coopers in London said the writ was a complete surprise. He said: "We have not been provided with all details of the claim. However, we are not aware of any grounds for any claim against us." He added that Coopers was not responsible for the collapse of Barings, which was "a result of management failures and fraud". The claim against the firm was "another example of suing the auditors because they are perceived to have deep pockets".

Paul Mattar, senior partner in

Deloitte & Touche in Singapore, said: "The writ comes as a surprise. We are satisfied that the audits of Barings Futures Singapore in 1992 and 1993 were conducted with all required professional skill. We are also mystified by the claim since none of the activities that caused the failure of Barings and the consequential losses occurred while we were auditors. In any event, the writ will be successfully defended."

The administrators said that they had reviewed the position in respect of the auditors and had formed the view that proceedings should be brought on behalf of the Barings

companies. The Barings businesses were sold to ING, the Dutch banking group, in March after ING received court approval for its offer to pay £1 for Baring Asset Management and to take over the assets, liabilities and management of Baring Securities. It injected £660 million in cash into the businesses.

The Barings companies remain in administration. Creditors include bondholders owed £100 million who were not repaid by ING, and perpetual note holders owed another £100 million.

If the administrators are success-

ful in their action, ING would be a subordinated creditor and, after ING, the Barings Foundation, Barings's main shareholder, would also rank.

In its report into the collapse of Barings, the Bank of England's board of banking supervision put the blame for the collapse with Nick Leeson, the rogue trader who ran up losses in Singapore, and with a lack of management controls that allowed him to do so.

However, it also criticised and questioned the actions of both firms of auditors.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET

FT-SE 100	3738.0	(-19.2)
Yield	3.82%	
FT-SE All share	1027.22	(-7.20)
Nikkei	2000.92	(-115.67)
Dow Jones	5195.32	(-23.44)
S&P Composite	811.82	(-1.58)

US RATE

Federal Funds	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Long Bond	7.11%	(7.11%)
Yield	8.06%	(8.06%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month interest	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Libor 3-month	11 1/2%	(11 1/2%)

STERLING

New York	1.5133*	(1.5133)
London	1.5137	(1.5137)
DM	1.941*	(1.941)
FF	7.6705	(7.6705)
SP	1.6204	(1.6204)
Yen	165.89	(165.89)
£ index	95.0	(95.0)

DOLLAR

London	1.4811*	(1.4750)
DM	3.8702*	(3.8702)
FF	1.910*	(1.910)
Yen	165.89	(165.89)
£ index	95.0	(95.0)

TOKYO

Tokyo close	Yen 105.65	
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NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Apr)	\$18.50	(\$18.50)
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GOLD

London close	\$462.50	(\$462.25)
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* denotes midday trading price

Signal failure

Railtrack will be forced to pay out £59 million to train operators this year as compensation for delays to rail services caused by its track and signalling failures. The figure was revealed as Railtrack which is due to be privatised in a stock market flotation in May. Railtrack also announced its last set of audited accounts before its shares are offered to investors. Page 26

Unilever deal

Unilever, the Anglo-Dutch food and soap powder group, has paid £360 million for Diversey, a Toronto-based cleaning products business. It doubles Unilever's market share. Page 27, *Tempus* 28

Granada set for great Forte sell-off

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

GRANADA will begin meetings today to decide the future of Forte's assets following the successful £3.8 billion takeover bid.

The leisure and media company has already outlined details of its intention to sell off the upmarket Exclusive and Meridian hotel chains, along with what it terms Forte's "trophy" hotels, such as the Waldorf in London and the George V in Paris.

It will also dispose of Forte's 68 per cent stake in the Savoy Group and the Welcome Break chain of motorway cafes, which the company must sell to meet conditions laid down by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Granada, however, refused yesterday to reveal the names of potential buyers. Gerry Robinson, Granada chief executive, said: "We have had interest from around half a dozen potential buyers, but we cannot add any more at this stage."

Inquiries by *The Times* reveal that the demise of the Forte empire follows the refusal of Whitbread, led by Peter Jarvis, to join Sir Rocco Forte and his family in a potential £800 million defensive strategy. The plan devised by Sir Rocco and his advisers is understood to have involved significant market purchases of Forte shares, designed to effectively neutralise Mercury Asset Management's key 15 per cent holding.

Sir Rocco and his family are believed to have been pre-

pared to commit close to £250 million to a share-buying operation, largely financed by lines of bank credit which were secretly put into place.

Whitbread, eager to clinch its proposed £1 billion purchase of Forte's restaurant and budget hotel operations, is understood to have initially responded positively to the Forte camp's proposals for a joint raid and is believed to have received an effective green light from the Takeover Panel.

Mr Jarvis and his co-directors, advised by Barings, are believed to have held a board meeting in the middle of last

week to consider market purchases of anything up to 15 per cent of Forte's equity. Whitbread's deliberations are believed to have been influenced by Granada's stock market raid last Wednesday that netted Gerry Robinson's camp a 9.2 per cent stake, later raised to 9.9 per cent.

The Forte camp, which was prepared to acquire a 5 per cent stake, desperately required a partner with Whitbread's financial muscle. If the two parties had joined forces, a joint cash offer was contemplated for MAM's crucial share block. If Forte and

Whitbread had acquired a 15 per cent stake, for an outlay of up to £570 million, it is highly questionable whether Granada would have succeeded.

Several institutions accepted that the game was over yesterday after MAM announced its support for Granada.

Mr Jarvis was not available to comment yesterday. A spokesman for Whitbread said that the company was "disappointed" that its purchase of the Forte roadside businesses would not now go ahead. He added: "We gave it our best shot and convinced a lot of people about the industrial logic and that we had the best management case."

Mr Robinson said, however, rule out Whitbread from posting a renewed offer for the Welcome Break business.

Granada secured victory after receiving acceptance from 67 per cent of shareholders before the offer period closed yesterday lunchtime.

Mr Robinson said: "Our job now is to take full advantage of the potential for the benefit of existing and new shareholders alike."

Hotels will now make up 24 per cent of the Granada group, while the restaurants will be included in the existing leisure and services divisions contributing 29 per cent of the group's revenue.

Mr Robinson said Granada's immediate priority was to meet with Forte board members and staff to discuss their future.



Winning smile: Gerry Robinson celebrates Granada's victory in the battle for Forte

Feared chief dictated outcome

By PATRICIA TEHAN

MUCH as she loathes the publicity, Carol Galley, joint vice-chairman of Mercury Asset Management, has once again helped to dictate the outcome of a hostile and controversial bid.

Yesterday morning MAM signalled Forte's battle for independence was lost by indicating it had lodged its acceptance of the offer from Granada in relation to its 14.2 per cent Forte stake. The shareholding had risen from 12.5

per cent in November when the bid was launched. Though that was not enough to allow Granada to win the battle, where MAM leads other fund managers follow.

Ms Galley is respected and feared in the City by both colleagues and directors of firms in which MAM takes an interest. Aged 48 and a workaholic, she earned £361,000 last year including bonuses. She is married to a German broker, has no children and spends

weekends at her home in France.

MAM has been a buyer of Granada shares since Mr Robinson arrived in 1991 and was known to admire his aggressive expansionist style. It has 14.8 per cent of Granada.

Ms Galley has had similar power in the past, notably when Granada made a £725 million hostile bid for London Weekend Television. MAM held 15 per cent of LWT - its vote helped Granada to win.

Farnell buys US group for \$2.8bn

By PHILIP PANGALOS

FARNELL Electronics, the electronic components distributor, is buying Premier Industrial Corporation in a deal worth \$2.8 billion.

Premier, of Cleveland, Ohio, is the fourth-largest US electronics component distributor and is 63 per cent controlled by the Mandel family. The deal will turn Farnell, which was capitalised at \$926 million before the acquisition, into one of the world's largest components distributors.

Howard Poulson, Farnell's chief executive, said: "It fits remarkably well and provides an ideal platform for future expansion." Premier made pre-tax profits of £114 million in the

year to May 31, on sales of \$540 million. Farnell is paying a hefty 39 per cent premium for Premier in what it calls a "once in a lifetime" deal.

Farnell will fund the acquisition by paying \$930 million in cash, with the balance split between ordinary and preference shares. Debt funding amounts to £580 million. Farnell is making a £349 million rights issue.

The deal, which is earnings dilutive in its first year, will allow Farnell to become a worldwide distributor of technical products. Up to \$150 million is likely to be raised from the sale of non-core operations.

Morton Mandel, 74, Premier's chairman and youngest of the founder directors, will become deputy chairman of the enlarged group, to be called Premier Farnell. The company will have nearly 7,000 employees and listings in London and New York. The Mandel family will own 17 per cent of the new group, rising to 25 per cent on the conversion of preference shares.

Farnell forecasts pre-tax profits before exceptional of at least £75 million in the year to January 31, and a final dividend of 6.2p.

Tempus, page 28
City Diary, page 29



Poulson: "ideal platform"

Clarke buoyant in face of CBI gloom

By PHILIP BASSETT AND JANET BUSH

KENNETH CLARKE, the Chancellor, last night forecast improved economic growth, even though the latest survey of UK business showed manufacturing activity to be sluggish with industry's new orders now falling.

Mr Clarke vigorously defended his optimistic Budget forecasts for this year. In a speech to the British American Chamber of Commerce, he predicted that consumers would lead the recovery this year, their confidence and spending power bolstered by tax cuts, low interest rates, pay increases, build-

ing society payouts, maturing Tassas and the electricity rebate. He defended his forecast of a 3.5 per cent rise in consumer spending and said the climate for investment had rarely been better.

His remarks came after the Confederation of British Industry's latest quarterly industrial trends survey showed that manufacturing industry is stalling as export order growth slackens off.

Total orders fell for the first time since January 1993, with a balance of 1 per cent of companies - those recording a fall set against those registering a rise - saying that orders were declining. Domestic orders fell for the second successive quarter, from minus 3 to minus 6 per cent.

The survey showed export orders growing much less rapidly, dropping back from a balance of 11 to 4 per cent, the slowest rate since a fall in exports in October 1993.

Manufacturing output growth moderated marginally, from 7 to 6 per cent, the slowest rate since October 1993.

Employment fell at the sharpest rate since July 1994. The balance of companies reporting job growth dropped from 3 to minus 11 per cent.

Pennington, page 27

Customers the winners in phone war

By ROSE TIEMAN
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BREAKING BT's monopoly over provision of telephone services in Britain has resulted in big improvements in standards of service, Don Cruickshank, the telecommunications regulator said.

The first studies of service standards offered to both domestic and business customers, published by Ofel yesterday, show BT compares favourably with its cable company rivals, but is often bettered by Kingston Communications, the company which by his-

torical accident provides the dominant telephone service in Hull.

BT's chief domestic rival, Mercury, fared badly, but its performance is absent from many of the tables since it was apparently unable to provide the necessary information.

Mr Cruickshank said the findings showed UK customers can expect "world class" levels of service. "Comparisons with statistics on BT's performance pre-privatisation and later in the 1980s show customers are benefiting from significantly improved services."

But Mercury came bottom on three

out of the four indicators for which it was able to supply information. The company, a subsidiary of Cable and Wireless, was only able to provide services to switched business customers by the promised date in 71 per cent of cases, compared with BT's 98 per cent. For dedicated business customers, Mercury's figure was 81 per cent, compared with BT's 98 per cent.

The company also came bottom of the table showing the percentage of complaints made by business subscribers that it managed to handle within 20 working days, with 75 per cent, compared with BT's 96 per cent.

But Mercury fared well when it came to bill accuracy, with only 0.2 complaints per 1,000 bills - the second best figure - compared with BT's 1.2.

Five cable television companies that also provide telephone services were included in the domestic subscriber survey - Bell CableMedia, Comcast, General Cable, Nynex and TeleWest.

Ofel has begun discussions aimed at persuading mobile phone operators to publish similar data on standards of service. Meanwhile, operators of wired networks have agreed to conduct customer satisfaction surveys, which Ofel will publish after Easter.

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Nobody does it better

AT&T calls for deregulation in battle with BT

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

AT&T, the world's second-biggest phone company, aims to build a \$1 billion dollar business in Britain within five years, serving business and domestic customers. Robert Allen, the chairman, said.

But progress towards that goal would be inhibited unless there was further deregulation to create a "level playing field" between BT and its rivals, he added.

"Our success in the UK will depend upon our ability to meet our customers' needs," he said at the launch of the company's services to business. "If the regulations are not right, we are not going to be as successful."

Mr Allen said it was essential that Ofcom carried through its plan to alter BT's licence in a

way that would ban anti-competitive behaviour. A formal response from BT on that issue is expected on February 2.

The AT&T chairman also claimed that customers would be discouraged from switching to AT&T unless Ofcom guaranteed that customers could change phone company without changing their number, and unless they could use the AT&T network without dialling a three-digit access code, as they must at present.

Britain is the first country outside America where AT&T has sought to develop a full business and domestic network. The move is made possible by Britain's liberal telecoms regime, which, he said, was more open to competition than any in the world.

Competition from AT&T, which, with annual revenues of almost \$80 billion, is second only to

NTT of Japan in size, is perceived as a significant threat by BT. Although the former state monopoly still carries an overwhelming majority of personal calls, it faces a growing challenge to its lucrative business market, while mobile phones are also becoming increasingly popular with consumers.

The American phone company said that it would concentrate initially on wooing business from large, multinational companies.

In particular, it will target retailers, firms offering professional services, financial services and those manufacturers that relied heavily upon telephones and paid large bills.

The company has assembled three switching centres, in London, Manchester and Edinburgh. Telephone lines will be leased from other companies that have high-quality capaci-

ty to spare. AT&T declined to reveal how much has been invested in its UK network, but said it had taken on more than 400 employees in Britain and planned to focus on offering a high-quality service, without being the cheapest.

Mr Allen said AT&T's plan to split itself into three businesses by the year end, announced last September, was on track. An initial public offering of shares in AT&T's soon-to-be-renamed systems and technology business, which makes a full range of telephones and exchange equipment, is expected at the end of the third quarter, he said.

Spinning off NCR, the computers and retail systems business, would be completed by the year end, leaving AT&T as a core telephone company, devoted to building the ability to offer services to customers around the world.

Railtrack must pay £59m for hold-ups

By JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

RAILTRACK will be forced to pay out £59 million to train operators this year as compensation for delays to rail services caused by its track and signalling failures.

The figure was revealed as Railtrack, due to be privatised in a stock market flotation in May, announced its last set of audited accounts before its shares are offered to investors.

The performance regime put in place by the Government heavily penalises Railtrack at an average rate of about £25 per minute if it is identified as responsible for holding up trains.

The timing of every train on the rail network is now recorded by 1,300 electronic clocks and any slippage in the timetable beyond three minutes is immediately investigated and

officially "blamed" on the rail organisation responsible.

Train operators are entitled to compensation from Railtrack if the average delays in their services caused by infrastructure failures over a 28-day period is greater than an agreed trigger level.

However, Railtrack has negotiated a £53 million rebate against performance failures in its first year of privatisation, so its net loss will be only £5 million. The compensation falls to £10 million by 2001.

Pre-tax profits for the six months to September 30, last year, were £98 million compared with £189 million for the previous 13 months. Turnover was £1.4 billion (£2.28 billion) of which track, station and depot access charges from train operators contributed about £1 billion.

Bob Horton, Railtrack chairman, said the figures represented an "encouraging" performance in the run-up to privatisation. Norman Broadhurst, finance director, said he expected operating profits for the full year to be "pretty similar" to the £305 million last year.

The £200 million impact of the 1994 signal-workers' strike and privatisation costs in the last financial year are likely to be offset by the rail regulator's ruling that access charges must be reduced by 8 per cent in real terms and a fall in freight income, he added.

The company, which has fixed assets of £4.4 billion, is expected to be valued at about £1.8 billion, placing it just outside the FT-SE 100 group of leading companies. "An enormous amount of effort has continued to be put into achieving a smooth operational reorganisation and preparing for our proposed flotation," said Mr Horton.

"I'm completely confident that continued progress in meeting service expectations and in further improving efficiency, reliability and safety will be reflected in the future results of Railtrack."



Bob Horton is confident that continued progress in efficiency, reliability and safety will be shown in results

Wrangle on nuclear clean-up

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

BRITISH ENERGY and the Government are at odds over the level of liability for decommissioning that should be passed on after privatisation of the nuclear industry.

Bardays de Zoete Wedd, the stockbroker advising the Government over the sell-off, yesterday told the Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee that the two sides were not yet in full agreement about the allocation of liabilities.

Martin O'Neill, the committee chairman, raised the fear that the taxpayer risked a £1 billion clean-up bill if the privatised industry ran into difficulties in meeting decommissioning obligations. He said that the Government had pledged £1 billion to the industry in the event of problems. Sir Peter Middleton, chairman of BZW, agreed that the provision existed, but said that it had not been accounted for in valuation work on British Energy, forecast to be sold for about £2.5 billion.

BZW representatives would not be drawn on a valuation for the industry. British Energy will put up to £50 million a year into a fund to pay decommissioning costs that will stretch over 120 years. That will be backed by the Government's provision.

By PATRICIA TEHAN AND JANET BUSH

MORTGAGE lending fell last month as house moves were put on hold in the run-up to Christmas, according to figures from the Building Societies' Association.

Gross mortgage lending was £2.87 billion compared with £2.95 billion in November. Net advances, which exclude remortgages and capital repayments, fell to £485 million from £505

million, one of the lowest in recent years but above October's £295 million low. Net new mortgage commitments were £2.42 billion, down from £3.2 billion in November.

Analysts said the fall was not surprising and did not change their forecasts of an improvement in the market. They had been predicting a December fall to about £2.6 billion. Adrian Coles, RSA director-general, said the figure compared favourably

with the £2.45 billion of December 1994. In the savings market, building societies saw another retail outflow in December of £63 million against £47 million in November.

Bank mortgage lending rose by £554 million in December, compared with an increase of £666 million in November, according to British Bankers' Association figures. Total bank lending to the private sector increased by £2.87 billion last month, up on

November's £975 million. M4 money supply rose by 1 per cent in December, pushing its annual growth rate up to 10 per cent from 9.3 per cent. This is even further above the Government's 3 to 9 per cent monitoring range and in double digits for the first time since February 1991.

The figures will continue to worry the Bank of England which cites above-target M4 growth as a reason for caution on cutting interest rates.

Some 500,000 households in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall will be allowed to switch when the pilot project starts.



Spottiswoode unconvinced

Ofgas keeps pressure up over date of pilot project

By OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

CLARE SPOTTISWOODE, the gas industry regulator, is to review preparations for opening the household gas market in the South West to competition in a fortnight after industry leaders failed to agree yesterday on the need to delay the April 1 start date.

But despite pleas from the British Gas pipeline company, TransCo, for the pilot to be delayed until June 1, Ms Spottiswoode said the industry would continue to aim for the start of April.

"April 1 is a challenging target for all concerned, but I did not hear anything today to convince me that it cannot be achieved," she said. "We shall continue to review the position." She hopes that by postponing any decision to delay the trial until the last moment, if a delay does become necessary, she can keep

it to a minimum. Ms Spottiswoode was speaking after chairing a meeting at Ofgas's London headquarters attended by officials from Ofgas, the Department of Trade and Industry, British Gas and the shippers, many of

them owned by oil and gas producers or electricity companies that want to compete with British Gas. TransCo said it continued to believe that a two-month delay was necessary. Harry Moulson, managing director, said this was to ensure that complex computer systems needed to use the TransCo system will operate effectively.

Ms Spottiswoode said that testing by TransCo had been "encouraging" and that Chris Ross, a senior partner at Touche Ross, the consultants advising Ofgas, had devised checks to decide whether new gas suppliers had adequate systems to handle the large numbers of people expected to switch supplier.

Some 500,000 households in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall will be allowed to switch when the pilot project starts.

Interest grows for Midlands

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

MIDLANDS ELECTRICITY, the bid for which by PowerGen was referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, says other companies are eyeing it for a takeover.

Market rumour has, for weeks, spoken of Tractebel, the Belgian utility, as interested in Midlands, which had a £1.9 billion price put on it by PowerGen. Much speculation surrounds US utilities, which have shown strong interest in UK electricity companies.

Midlands has told the Stock Exchange that it has received more than one approach in response to a recent rise in its share price. However, it said that there was no immediate prospect of an offer.

The MMC is due to report by the end of March on bids by PowerGen and National Power for regional electricity companies.

Dutch Parliament to debate Fokker

THE Dutch Parliament will today hold an emergency debate on the future of Fokker, the regional aircraft builder facing collapse after Daimler-Benz, its German parent, ended financial support. Ministers are expected to agree bridging loan facilities for several months to enable the viable parts of Fokker, including defence manufacturing and aircraft maintenance, to be rescued. But prospects for regional aircraft assembly, which employs about half the company's 7,900 employees, appear bleak.

Fokker directors met again last night to discuss seeking protection from creditors. The shares remain suspended. The Dutch Cabinet met to consider whether to provide the four million guilders (£6 million) that Fokker is estimated to need each day to stay afloat. On Monday, Daimler-Benz withdrew support for Fokker, taking DM2.3 billion (£1.03 billion) of provisions. The Dutch government refused to contribute 1.3 billion guilders to a restructuring plan.

BREM wins £50m fund

KINGFISHER, the retailing group, has appointed Barr Rosenberg European Management (BREM) to manage the £50 million UK equity portfolio of its pension scheme. The fund manager, which said that its appointment was a "very significant" one, has been briefed to outperform the FTA all-share index. Jennie Paterson, of BREM, said: "We have been managing UK equities as part of a pan-European portfolio since January 1993, but this is our first segregated UK equity portfolio."

Optimism at Colefax

COLEFAX AND FOWLER, the home furnishings supplier, said it has seen little change in the difficult market conditions but feels optimistic about future prospects, which would be enhanced by increased marketing efforts and operational efficiencies. In the half-year to October 31, C&F lifted pre-tax profits to £694,000 from £627,000 on turnover that was almost unchanged at £17.9 million (£17.76 million). Earnings were 2.2p a share, compared with 1.98p. The interim dividend is increased to 0.75p a share from 0.7p, payable April 10.

SeaPerfect suspended

SHARES in SeaPerfect were suspended at 75p yesterday after the shellfish company said that it had failed to secure adequate facilities from banks in Chile, where its operations are located, to meet its working capital requirements. The company said that, in spite of reductions in the workforce and cutbacks in capital investment, further funds would be required to secure its long-term future. The shares were placed on the stock market at £20p each in November 1994.

Woolwich purchase

THE Woolwich Building Society, which announced £3 billion flotation plans two weeks ago, has doubled the size of its mortgage book in France to £1.5 billion with the acquisition of Midland Bank's residential mortgage book. Peter Robinson, Woolwich chief executive, said that the move was part of the society's intention to expand through selective acquisitions. He said: "Banque Woolwich represents a valuable, diversified source of mortgage business at a time when the UK mortgage market is intensely competitive."

New chief at the FT

PEARSON, the publishing and media group, has announced further management changes, including the appointment of Stephen Hill to succeed John Mankinson as chief executive of the Financial Times newspaper. Mr Hill was previously head of Westminster Press, where he is succeeded by Will Gibson. Mr Mankinson was named group finance director in December after James Joll said he would step down in April. Greg Dyke, chairman and chief executive of Pearson Television, also joined the board in December.

Domino falls to £5.2m

DOMINO PRINTING SERVICES, the printing equipment company, suffered a sharp fall in pre-tax profits to £5.2 million from £13 million in the year to October 31, affected by serious technical problems that disrupted trading. The direct cost of resolving the problems and supporting customers was almost £4 million, while the loss of sales resulted in a net margin reduction of £3 million. Profits were just £500,000 in the second half. The final dividend is maintained at 6.4p a share, payable April 10, making 10.1p a share (9.6p).

Shandwick pegs payout

SHANDWICK, the international public relations company, is holding the total dividend at 1.3p a share, with a 0.87p final payable on April 18. In the year to October 31, pre-tax profit fell to £2.5 million from £7.3 million. Results were affected by a net exceptional charge of £5.2 million, mainly comprising a £4.8 million goodwill write-off arising from disposals. Profits before exceptionals were £7.7 million (£7.3 million). As a result of the exceptional charges, earnings were reduced to 1.7p a share (4.5p). The shares eased to 41½p from 44½p.

DAEJAN HOLDINGS P.L.C.

INTERIM STATEMENT

Results for the half year ended 30 September 1995 - unaudited.

	6 months to 30.9.95 £'000	6 months to 30.9.94 £'000
Net Rental Income	11,179	9,938
Surplus on Sale of Trading Properties	1,934	4,496
Other Income	45	(20)
	13,158	14,414
Administration & Other Expenses	(2,119)	(2,229)
Operating Profit from Continuing Operations	11,039	12,185
Surplus on Sale of Investment Properties	518	786
Net Interest Payable	(1,139)	(1,833)
Profit on Ordinary Activities before Taxation	10,418	11,138
Less: Taxation	(3,410)	(3,600)
Minority Interests	(22)	(13)
Profit attributable to shareholders	£8,986	£7,505
Earnings Per Share	42.9p	46.0p

The results for the half year ended 30 September 1994 and 30 September 1995 have been prepared under FRS1.

An Interim Dividend of 15p per share (1995 - 12p) will be paid on 14 March 1996 to shareholders registered on 5 February 1996. This dividend will amount to £2,007,000 (1995 - £1,355,000).

The full year's profit is expected to reflect the materially lower level of residential sales evident in the above Statement, which is as anticipated in last year's Chairman's Statement.

The Directors' current intention is to, at least, maintain the overall dividend for the full year at last year's level and the increase in the Interim Dividend has been made, in order to equate the interim and final dividends.

The financial information included in this document does not comprise statutory accounts within the meaning of Section 240 of the Companies Act 1985. The statutory accounts for the year to 31 March 1995, on which the auditors have given an unqualified opinion, have been filed with the Registrar of Companies. The interim financial information is unaudited.

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Cyprus Cyp	0.747	0.682
Denmark Kr	8.26	6.45
Finland Mk	7.43	6.78
France Fr	8.08	7.41
Germany DM	2.39	2.16
Greece Dr	350.00	354.00
Hong Kong \$	12.36	11.36
Ireland Pt	1.01	0.63
Israel Shk	5.1300	4.4800
Italy Lira	2518.00	2363.00
Japan Yen	174.20	158.20
Malta	0.587	0.532
Netherlands Gld	2.854	2.424
New Zealand \$	2.44	2.22
Norway Kr	10.36	9.55
Portugal Esc	202.50	224.00
S Africa Rd	inf	5.25
Spain Ptas	195.50	182.50
Sweden Kr	11.00	10.50
Switzerland Fr	1.93	1.75
Turkey Lira	inf	89182.0
USA \$	1.812	1.462

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

صك: امن الاصل

□ Awaiting the cost of Granada's success □ Railtrack's strategy on the way to market □ CBI accentuates the positive

Life ends at Forte

TO THE victor, the spoils. To the mercenaries who helped in that victory, an as yet unmeasured reckoning.

One does not have to be too ardent an admirer of Sir Rocco to feel some unease at Granada's success. But first, consider why he lost. This column has pointed out that the Savoy group, far from holding some unassailable position in the cultural life of the nation, is nothing more than a collection of good hotels.

How much truer this is of Forte, containing some London trophies, the Meridien chain, some mid-market hotels and Little Chef and Happy Eater.

The Savoyards, in their battle with Sir Rocco's father, used that accumulated cultural baggage to its full, hoping to deprive a mere restaurateur of control of their precious hotels. Their contempt was mirrored during Forte's defiance of Granada — a business led by a "mere caterer".

Much of the blame for the Forte defeat rests with Sir Rocco. Like Louis XIV, he declared: "L'Etat, c'est moi!" Like Louis's descendants, he paid the price for ignoring the demands of the mob. His own advisers admitted privately that change had in the past been too gradual. The mob of disappointed and disaffected fund managers did not believe their claims for the future.

Sir Rocco made two mistakes.

He did not tell the City well before the bid that he might concentrate on Meridien, and show a real will to sell the trophies — indeed, he did not tell the City enough, full stop. He also failed to bring in outside management, which would have defused the whisper that he was not the march of his father.

Gerry Robinson now has to carry out those disposals. But consider this possibility. If Granada keeps most of the hotels, the interest bill in the next full year would swallow a quarter of the profits. This is not comfortable, but it is not crucifying either — indeed, Granada has been there before, and the business is a huge generator of cash.

Mr Robinson's first plan, before the higher bid, was to keep the hotels. Most experts say that that industry has another couple of years at least before the next cyclical downturn. It is not inconceivable that he may change his mind again.

For the City, Granada's success is business as usual. Only failure would have changed the rules, by putting a cap on bid expectations and so sending

prices downwards, especially if Forte had been aided by an institution as powerful as MAM. This is probably one reason why MAM was always going to support Granada.

But however many more mega-bids there are before any new government pulls down the shutters, Granada/Forte does represent some sort of watershed. It attracted unusually strong interest outside the City, and those observers probably did not much like the behaviour of that mob of institutions. Their attention may yet be translated into political measures to limit big, highly-leveraged takeovers.

Leaves on the line

HOW appropriate of Railtrack to choose the worst day for industrial trouble since its new performance regime was put into place six weeks ago to announce the latest whistle-stop on the line to flotation.

The non-appearance of half the trains in Kent yesterday morning will not hurt Railtrack's



revenues, which are based on take-or-pay contracts with the train operating companies. Instead, the fines for the late-running of trains will be passed on direct to the latter.

That arrangement is a measure of how the company is being buffed up on its way to the market, as is the neat and largely unmarked property deal struck last week whereby Railtrack can keep three quarters of the profits on its extensive portfolio.

These give a fair idea of how its advisers are going to market Railtrack this spring, as a risk-free utility with a built-in premium from its property assets, a sort of National Grid crossed with BAA. The question remains whether this will be enough to

overcome the potentially disastrous political risk.

As yet unsettled, and likely to be taken right to the last moment if the Treasury follows its normal pattern, is capital structure. Talks over the next few months will decide where debt falls between a low of £500 million to a high of £800 million favoured by Treasury hawks, against a total worth of £1.5 billion.

New Labour is still running shy of outright renationalisation, but a letter in November from Brian Wilson, the party's deputy on transport, made it clear to the operators that their lives would be made as difficult as possible under a Labour government, up to the point where high service standards imposed might deprive them of any profits.

Much the same might be said to Railtrack. If the party could only work out some coherent policy over this privatisation. But the company will have to be priced to sell, if only because the Government cannot contemplate a pre-election disaster. The pricing may require a forward yield somewhat better than the 6.5 per cent the Grid now enjoys, prop-

erty benefits for Railtrack notwithstanding, before the "Sids with a degree", at whom the float will be targeted, are on board.

The reliability of hindsight

WHEN Ken Clarke and Eddie George met last week, they had already been briefed privately on the CBI's latest industrial trends survey, published to everyone else yesterday. Small wonder that they cut base rates.

CBI leaders yesterday chose to be "positive" about the latest survey, saying manufacturing neither is nor looks likely to be heading for another recession. But the CBI's optimism is based largely on the survey's forward indicators of manufacturers' output and other expectations.

These indicators, though, have proved not just recently but over a longer period of time to be less reliable than the survey's backward-looking hard numbers, with companies' expectations mostly not being met.

To judge from what firms have recorded, rather than what they

would like to see, manufacturing industry is clearly feeling queasy. Domestic orders fell again and export prospects are worsening. The two combined mean that total orders are now falling — or are "flat", as the CBI would have it. At the same time, destocking is under way, output growth is slowing, jobs are still going and confidence still slipping.

Business is not yet pressing for a further rate cut, though some harder-hit and mainly domestic sectors such as construction want one. But the Chancellor and the Governor will be hoping for better things in three months, when they are slipped an early copy of the next full CBI survey.

De profundis

THE ever-generous Eurocrats, as well as helping out Viennese prostitutes and the London homeless, are funding an innovative scheme in Antwerp. This will allow older men to be reintegrated into urban life, and I am not making this up, "by repairing wheelchairs and bicycles". Clearly not something that could ever be dealt with by national governments under the subsidiarity clause. But after the Forte decision, can such aid to those ostracised and on the margins of civilised society be denied to City fund managers?

Unilever makes £360m Canadian acquisition

By SARAH BAGNALL

UNILEVER, the international food and soap powder group, has become the second-largest player in the non-domestic detergents market with the acquisition of Diversey, a Canadian business, for £370 million (£360 million).

The Anglo-Dutch group has acquired the Toronto-based business from The Molson Companies in a move that doubles Unilever's share of the world industrial and institutional cleaning products business to 14 per cent. Henkel-Ecolab, a German company, is the market leader, with a 16 per cent share of the £7.4 billion world market.

The cleaning products are used by companies such as food manufacturers to clean machinery and by institutions,

such as hospitals and hotels. Diversey is particularly strong in the food and drink industries, which Unilever has only a limited presence through Lever Industrial International. The company said that Diversey was "highly complementary" with Lever Industrial International, which mainly services the floor care, laundry and institutional sectors.

On a geographical basis, Diversey has a strong presence in North America, Europe, Japan and emerging markets. Unilever said: "The emerging markets are showing the fastest growth and we think these are areas where we should invest heavily."

Unilever last week expanded its industrial detergents operations in China through a

partnership with the Wels group of companies, based in Hong Kong.

Unilever said that the acquisition provided synergies and that the combined businesses "are expected to achieve significant profitable growth".

David Lang, an analyst with Henderson Crustworthy, said that the acquisition was at a good price and put Unilever in a much stronger position from which to grow its detergents business.

The Molson Companies has retained a metal finishing business, a water treatment business and its US institutional and laundry business.

The Diversey businesses acquired by Unilever have 8,200 employees, of whom 500 are in the UK, and 40 manufactur-

ing sites spread around the world. It made a net operating profit before amortisation of goodwill of £34 million on sales of £507 million in the year to March 31 1995. At September 30, net assets stood at £184 million. Unilever Industrial International, which employs 4,000 people worldwide, has annual sales of £490 million.

Unilever, of which Niall FitzGerald is to take over as UK chairman in August, is due to report its results for the year to December 1995 on February 20. Analysts are forecasting pre-tax profits of about £2.5 billion, up from £2.36 billion last time. The shares fell 2p, to £13.63.

Tempos, page 28

Canada to compensate Westland

THE Canadian Government has agreed to pay compensation of C\$158 million (£77 million) to Westland Helicopters, of Yeovil, and Augusta, its Italian partner, after cancelling a £2.8 billion contract to supply 50 maritime helicopters (Ross Tienary writes).

The cash will be shared equally between Westland, owned by GKN, the defence to pallet-hire group, and its Italian partner in the development and production of the EH101 long-range helicopter.

A Westland spokesman said that most of the half share which Westland will receive would offset costs incurred on the contract. But there would be an £8 million surplus, to be taken in the accounts for the year ending December 1995.

Berkeley makes £73m cash call

By PHILIP PANGALOS

BERKELEY GROUP, the specialist housebuilder, is looking to take advantage of the shake-out in a depressed housing market and has launched a £73.1 million rights issue to help it to expand its land development and to pay off debts. The rights issue, underwritten by SBC Warburg, is on a two-for-nine basis, and is priced at 45p a share. Berkeley shares closed 5p to 504p.

The proceeds will eliminate Berkeley's £16.8 million borrowings and allow it to react quickly to opportunities to buy quality land and development schemes. Berkeley, which operates from 14 regional companies from the South to the Midlands and the North West, said these opportunities tend to occur when the housing market has been quiet.

Tony Pidgeley, chief executive, is positive on Berkeley's prospects in spite of the harsh conditions in much of the country and said now is the right time to expand, "both organically and possibly through modest acquisition".

On current trading, Mr Pidgeley said that while December was quiet, January has started positively and he expects improved trading this year. Since the half year ended on October 31, Berkeley has made purchases or commitments on 53 sites involving 913 units at a cost of £43 million.

Mr Pidgeley said: "The housing market is showing very clear signs of recovery. We had a very strong January and we're seeing growth across the market. I think there are some wonderful opportunities out there for a specialist housebuilder like us."

Tempos, page 28

Electricity customers face charge

ELECTRICITY customers are likely to face a £1 per year surcharge on their bills to fund competition in supply after the regulator criticised the electricity pool and pressed the industry to gear up for the competitive market in 1998 (Christine Buckley writes). Stephen Littlechild dismissed proposals from the electricity pool for implementation of competition that would have cost the electricity companies £30 million and which threatened to spark rebellion from some suppliers. He said that estimates from the pool were neither "reasonable nor necessary".

Professor Littlechild said development costs should exceed £50 million with operating costs at £15 million per year.



David Barnes, chief executive, has had to contend with increased takeover speculation.

Zeneca slips despite high profits forecast

By GEORGE SIVILL

SHARES in Zeneca dipped 14p to £12.85 even though the pharmaceutical, specialty chemicals and seeds group said its results for 1995 would be at the upper end of market expectations. However, Zeneca said that the charge for restructuring of manufacturing and distribution of the pharmaceuticals business would amount to £60 million.

Pre-tax profits forecasts range from £850 million to £875 million for the year to December 31. The results are due on March 7. The share price fall was blamed by analysts on a hangover from the launch by BZW on Mon-

day of 15 million American-style warrants in Zeneca. Zeneca was floated off from ICI in June 1993 and has been the subject of much takeover speculation.

Analysts said the trading statement was positive on the pharmaceuticals division but was disappointing for specialty chemicals and seeds. Some said they were tempted to take profits on their Zeneca shares after the recent wave of takeover speculation.

Zeneca said that for agrochemicals, the rate of profit growth for the year is expected to be marginally ahead of the rate in the first half of 1995,

but the overall result for the sector will be muted by a poorer seeds performance.

In specialty chemicals, sales showed similar growth to that reported at the half-year. Textile colours continued to experience competitive trading conditions, but the effects chemicals businesses maintained their recent good performance. Sales of Quorn, the artificial protein, continued to grow strongly, but continued downward pressure on sales prices and increases in raw materials costs mean profits in the division are expected to be similar to those of 1994.

Price cut at Euro Disney trims loss

By OUR CITY STAFF

EURO DISNEY, the theme park near Paris, almost halved its first-quarter losses after attracting more visitors. A net loss of £157 million for the three months to December 31 compared with a loss of £109 million in the first quarter a year earlier.

The company, which is 39 per cent owned by Walt Disney, said operating revenues at the theme park were £1 billion, compared with £854 million. It said revenue growth was driven by a strong rise in park attendance and hotel occupancy, due in part to the lower park entry prices from last April.

Losses were reduced in spite of an increase of £137 million in lease and financial charges due mostly to the company's financial restructuring.

The company reported its first annual profit last November, of £114 million, against a £1.8 billion loss in the previous 12 months when fears of an imminent closure kept visitors away. It also reported a profit for the final two quarters of the 1994-95 financial year.

Analysts said the results were slightly better than expected, reflecting the success of the strategy of price cuts, which has drawn an increasing number of visitors in recent months.

Nigel Reed, analyst with Paribas Capital Markets in London, said: "It's still a loss, but sales revenue growth of 17 per cent is better than I expected. It shows that the strategy of cutting admission prices is continuing to pay off as visitors see better value."

Alldays to expand

By MARTIN BARROW

WATSON & PHILIP, the food distribution and retailing group, plans to add 100 outlets to Alldays, its convenience stores chain, to increase the network to more than 550 stores nationally this year.

Yesterday W&P reported a rise in pre-tax profits to £18.5 million, from £10.6 million, in the year to October 29, helped

by a 52 per cent increase in operating profit at Alldays to £12.2 million. A total of 102 outlets were added to Alldays during the year. Food services lifted operating profits 49 per cent to £3.4 million.

Earnings rose to 32.6p a share from 27.9p. There is a final dividend of 11.5p a share, making a total of 16.5p (15.5p).

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Sharks were halted in Sea Perfect, the shellfish farmer

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Jul	940-939	Jul	1054						
Aug	940-939	Aug	1054						
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Jul	940-939	Jul	1054						

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CITY DIARY

Going out at the top...

CHEER up Sir Rocco. Yesterday wasn't a total loss after all. At the Grosvenor House last night, and within hours of the outcome of the Granada/Forte bid battle, Forte group picked up top honours at the annual Travel Weekly Globe ceremony. Forte, which has won prizes in every category since the awards were started in 1977, and last year collected the Best European title, was last night winner of the magazine's awards in both the Best European and UK Hotel categories.

...and with style

MEANWHILE, Lord Forte, founding father of the empire which has now passed to Granada, was as gracious as ever when a photographer from *The Times* asked to call on him at his London home. "I have a luncheon at 1pm, so please come at 3pm. And I hope your picture is not going to be used for my obituary."

Club clash

GRANADA's Gerry Robinson, victorious over Forte, when asked how he would relax now the battle for Forte was won, quipped he would probably play golf, before adding, "Oops. But Sir Rocco and I are members of the same club."



"Didn't it used to be called the Waldorf?"

Value for money

NICE to see that some non-executive directors earn their pay. Bob Horton, who heads Railtrack and is a former head of BP, as well as being a non-executive director at Farnell Electronics, was the man who instigated yesterday's £1.85 billion mega-deal for Farnell to acquire Premier Industrial Corporation, the US catalogue distributor of electronic components. Horton, who is paid £17,500 a year — the same as Farnell's other non-execs — has for some time known Morton Mandel, Premier's sprightly 74-year-old chairman, as they both have a long-standing investment with various US charities. Horton approached Mandel and got the two sides talking last November but Howard Poulson, Farnell's chief executive, assures me Horton will not receive a finder's fee.

Pensioned off

IN THE aftermath of the Maxwell trial, Sir Peter Middleton's turn of phrase at a select committee inquiry into the privatisation of the nuclear industry raised eyebrows. The chairman of BZW, adviser to the Government on the sale, told the committee a separate fund was being set up to pay for decommissioning in order to ensure reliability of cash. He said it would operate on similar lines to a pension fund.

Home leave

IN THE latest round of staff pruning at SBC Warburg, 12 UK equity traders out of a complement of 55 were last night made redundant. The bank said the positions had been "under review" since the integration of Swiss Bank and SG Warburg, and was expected to be a "one-off".

COLIN CAMPBELL

Issues stirred by Forte scrap will resonate for some time

Alasdair Murray
on one of the most
acrimonious
takeover battles
of recent years

In the end, it was deceptively easy. At 3.30pm yesterday, a jubilant Granada team revealed that the company had secured enough acceptances for its £3.8 billion bid for Forte to declare victory. Within an hour, a relaxed Gerry Robinson, chief executive of Granada, was congratulating his erstwhile opponents on their fine defence and beginning to plan for the future.

But the result disguises the truth behind one of the most acrimonious and closely fought takeover battles of recent years, the repercussions of which are being felt far beyond the two companies themselves. What started as a straightforward City fight over who should run an assorted collection of hotels and restaurants has finished with the public imagination gripped by the two chief protagonists, Mr Robinson and Sir Rocco Forte, chief executive of Forte. The bid has also raised questions about the assumptions and financial techniques that make bids such as Granada's feasible in the first place.

The battle started with a bang on November 22. While Sir Rocco was in Yorkshire on a shoot, Granada unveiled its £3.3 billion bid to the markets. It was a hardly an auspicious start for Forte, and Mr Robinson could hardly believe his luck. After two years of hard work, under a team led by Charles Allen, chief executive designate of Granada TV, the company had picked the perfect moment to launch the bid. The markets were saying by the end of the day that writing a miracle defence for Forte was a dead duck.

Forte's performance over the past few years had been sluggish. Its shares had underperformed the FT-SE all-share index by 40 per cent, and its dividend was almost a quarter below the level paid out in 1990. The company was perceived as obsessed with its "trophy" hotels such as the Waldorf in London and the George V in Paris and its 66 per cent stake in the Savoy and not concerned enough with providing real value to its shareholders through its more profitable mid-market chains such as Posthouse or Crest.

In contrast, Granada was a Square Mile star, outperforming the FT-SE by 156 per cent since 1990, increasing profits since Gerry Robinson arrived in 1991 from £57 million to £331 million, and having successfully bedded in its most recent takeover targets, LWT and Sustrail Catering.

But the image of the hapless Sir Rocco caught out by City professionals quickly proved to be false. If Granada had initially suspected that wrenching control of Forte from its founding family would be easy they had underestimated Sir Rocco's fighting powers. Sir Rocco, with his dapper Savile Row suits and immaculate establishment contacts may have looked like an old style City gent, but he was not going to give up the hotel and restaurant empire built up by his immigrant father, Lord Forte, without a serious fight.

Within a fortnight Forte hit back: Sir Rocco quickly assembled an impressive defence team, including Morgan Stanley, SBC Warburg, and later Cazenove, but led by an old schoolfriend, Roberto Mendoza, vice-president of JP Morgan and a veteran of the brutal takeover battles on Wall Street in the 1980s.

Forte began to aggressively sell its assets, first disposing of peripheral businesses such as Lillywhites, the sports store, for £23 million and Grierasons the drink wholesaler, for £23 million. The strategy developed into a fundamental restructuring of the Forte businesses, initially envisaged as a demerger of the restaurant and hotel arms, but becoming a wholesale sell-off of assets that were regarded as a poor fit. Travelodge, the US budget hotel chain, was sold for £114 million and just last weekend Forte agreed a deal with Regal hotels to dispose of the mid-priced White Hart chain for £122 million.

But the main deal was done with Whitbread, the brewer, which offered £1 billion to buy Forte's roadside business, including the Little Chef, Welcome Break and UK Travelodge chains, provided Forte's defence succeeded. With the money from the disposals, Forte was able to devise its coup de grace — an £800 million share buy-back plan announced on January 2. The scheme, which included a commitment to increase the dividend by 20 per cent for the next three years and the distribution of Forte's stake in the Savoy to shareholders, tipped the balance back in Forte's favour. There was even talk that Granada would withdraw from the bid altogether, or at best offer a token rise in the price and accept defeat.

But Mr Robinson has built his reputation on his fighting prowess and still had a week to put together a response. When it came on January 9, in the form of a 47p special dividend effectively increasing the bid to £3.8 billion, it proved to be a killer blow. By that stage, however, the bid battle had split over on to a much wider front. Other companies and organisations were being caught in the crossfire.

Both sides admitted they wanted to dispose of the Savoy stake, but left the Wontner family, who retained voting control of the upmarket hotel group, uncertain over its future. The venerable gentlemen of the Forte Council, an archaic body originally formed to promote temperance, also became involved. The council controlled just over 50 per cent of the voting rights in Forte and so possessed the power to veto the bid. Granada was forced to offer £50 million, equivalent to 664 a share, to persuade the council to not intervene.



Sir Rocco Forte, chief executive, ran an aggressive defence campaign



BSkyB's David Chance, Charles Allen, top right, and Gerry Robinson, below



Messrs Allen and Robinson picked the perfect moment to drive against Forte



Mr Robinson has congratulated his opponents and begun to make plans

TIMETABLE OF THE BID BATTLE

- November 22: Granada launches £3.3 billion bid, offering shareholders around 328p a share or 321p cash.
- December 3: Forte sells Lillywhites for £28.5 million.
- December 4: Forte announces plans to demerge the restaurant division and sell off its Savoy stake.
- December 6: Forte sells Grierasons for £23 million.
- December 12: Granada outlines plans to merge Crest and Posthouse, and Meridian and Exclusive brands.
- December 14: Granada claims £100 million cost savings in deal.
- December 20: Forte sells Travelodge business in the US for £112 million.
- December 30: Forte agrees sale to Whitbread of roadside businesses for £1.05 billion if bid defence successful.
- January 2: Forte revises defence to include £500 million share buyback, 20 per cent increase in dividend and distribution of Savoy stake to shareholders.
- January 9: Council of Forte accepts £50 million offer from Granada to refrain from using its veto.
- January 9: Granada raises bid to £3.8 billion, worth 373.5p a share or cash offer of 362p. Says will sell Meridian and Exclusive brands.
- January 16: Forte announces splitting roles of chief executive and chairman, with Sir Anthony Tennant becoming chairman.
- January 20: Forte sells White Hart hotels for £122 million.
- January 23: Deadline for acceptances. Granada wins.

in the media, polarising opinion to an unusual degree, as both sides sought to win the hearts and minds of the shareholders, who would ultimately decide Forte's fate. The Forte cause became the rallying cry of those who view the latest outbreak of bid fever in the City as destructive and shortsighted. They accused Granada of indulging in asset-stripping, Granada supporters retorted that the company was challenging the complacency and snobbery of Forte's establishment culture.

It also focused attention on the role of the fund managers, the pivotal figures in any bid, demonstrating that the fortunes of British industry were now largely in the hands of a few anonymous City men and women. In an unusual move, Mercury Asset Management lifted the veil of secrecy on its dealings on the last morning and revealed it had cast its 15 per cent stake for Granada. Carol Galley, MAM's vice-chairman, had effectively decided the outcome of the bid.

Forte will quickly become no more than a memory. Its name is likely to be lost from the hotels and restaurants it ran for so many years. But the issues that the takeover battle stirred up are likely to resonate for some time to come.

Recession — the sinister message of the bull run

Last week I teased the Germans, among others, for wishful thinking. Little knowing that it was a matter of international agreement, but now it is official. The Group of Seven met last weekend to consider the signs of a general economic downturn, and produced an agreed solution: they forecast an upturn in the second half of the year. This, of course, excused them from doing anything. This looks likely, but evades a vital question? Up from what? If the current downturn is as sharp as European evidence suggests, even a relative recovery could leave us in recession — and EMU in ruins. Not the best background to the Commission's extravagant Euro advertising campaign.

This, you may think, is nothing more than a cheap Eurosceptic joke. The G7 is surely as well qualified to make a forecast as any broker (and some share the rosy view of the G7), let alone a mere columnist. What is more, the markets are endorsing the G7 view, rushing ahead to daily new records and the markets, on one traditional view, are never wrong. But that assumes that stock markets are good economic forecasts, while their record shows just the opposite — they have forecast eight of the last two recessions. And on a Gordon Pepper, market-monetarist interpretation, the bull market means just the opposite: a recession.

It is some time since this column spelt out Professor Pepper's view, so here goes. Markets are roared in the short term not by economic expectations, but by the flow of money. When the economy is vigorous, savings and credit flow into real investment in plant and buildings, and into consumer spending. Security markets respond only sluggishly to improved profits and lower government borrowing. In a slowdown, by contrast, companies prefer bids to real expansion, and consumers trim their spending. This pumps money into the markets: it has nowhere else to go. Hence the long history of bull markets in economic recessions. Historically, the bottom of the recession often marks a market peak. The

pointing, and judge whether the cause is temporary. A new theory was recently put before Congress by Governor Larry Lindsey of the US Federal Reserve. At the least, it deserves serious attention. Lindsey cites two causes: growing inequality, and the spread of plastic money. Growing inequality, according to Reaganomic theory, should have caused a bulge in saving, Victorian-style; it did not. The reason, says Lindsey, citing detailed statistics collected by the Fed, is the democratisation of the credit card. Much of the growth in spending has been financed by credit cards issued to first-time holders with incomes as low as \$10,000 a year. This explains the surge in US consumer debt, and may also explain the slowdown: poor families have run into the credit buffers. Now we may see the Reaganomic result: higher saving, weak spending.

This is plausible, though tentative and controversial. Has anything similar happened this side of the pond? We don't know, because our central bankers lack the Fed's intellectual curiosity. Somebody should find out.

Why the slowdown? The fingers-crossed view is that this is no more than an inventory sub-cycle, which will resolve itself as soon as stock ratios are restored to normal. But every recession, deep or otherwise, starts with an inventory overshoot: we need to explain why sales have been disappearing. Why the slowdown? The fingers-crossed view is that this is no more than an inventory sub-cycle, which will resolve itself as soon as stock ratios are restored to normal. But every recession, deep or otherwise, starts with an inventory overshoot: we need to explain why sales have been disappearing.

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Eurostar's service and the little-known link train

From Mr John Grant-Wood

Sir, Sir Alastair Morton's comments on Eurostar (Report, January 11) are depressing but familiar. My wife and I have booked a few days in The Hague to see the Vermeer Exhibition and will travel by rail. A very responsible travel firm informed me that European Passenger Services could not book first class from Edinburgh to London Waterloo on the link train, and that we could not stay overnight in London on

the way back in order to return on the same service. Our excellent Continental Booking Department at Waverley Station, in Edinburgh, confirmed that they can book me straight through to The Hague first class from Edinburgh, and that I can stay overnight in London both going out and coming back. It is essential to be able to do this, as some journeys to and from Continental Europe obviously arrive too late for the onward connections. I have not yet met anyone

here among the general public who knows about the link train, and a French student friend was told recently by the local branch of a big travel agent that to return to Paris by the cheapest way was to take the train to London King's Cross, make her way to Heathrow and fly from there! The Eurostar is superb, but the publicity is dismal. Yours faithfully, JOHN GRANT-WOOD, Rossarden, 20 Greenhill Gardens, Edinburgh.

The Nobel laureate, his wife and how expectation moves house prices

From Mr John Raybould

Sir, Pennington is quite right to say that house prices are harder to forecast than virtually any other economic statistic because "As in sub-atomic physics, the market is weirdly affected by the presence of the observer" (December 28). He is supported by none other than the 1995 Nobel Prize Winner in Economics, Professor Robert E Lucas, of the University of Chicago. His highly influential work on the impact of people's "rational expectations" has led, as his Nobel citation notes, "to a fundamental re-think of the efficacy of demand management policies".

So Pennington's comments that, in the housing market, "one of the most important uncertainties is the expectation among house-owners of what prices will do next" have become a very important aspect of Lucas economics. Mrs Lucas, too, seems to know all about the role of the unexpected. Perhaps bearing in mind that seven economists at the University of Chicago had already won Nobel Prizes, she actually included in her recent divorce settlement the innovative provision that if her husband won the Nobel Prize within a specified period, she would get half his prize money! With only a few days of the cause remaining in effect, he won! She is now better off, I believe, by \$300,000. Was this a triumph of feminine intuition or rational expectations, I wonder? Yours sincerely, JOHN RAYBOULD, The Old Vicarage, Newport, Essex.

Letters to the Business and Finance
of The Times
be sent by fax on 0171-782 5112.

Generators will charge some companies more, says Rodney Hobson

Businesses to pay a higher price for power

Stand by for an increase in power costs. After a period of stability and even falling prices in a buyer's market, companies face a first quarter squeeze with the introduction of a new network code for gas and changes to local distribution costs for electricity.

Andrew Gardiner, performance group manager at Procord, says that businesses in the South West could be particularly affected by electricity price rises. He says: "Businesses located further away from the distribution centre will be charged more. Many power generation sites are in the North, where businesses could come out of the changes quite nicely. Historically, power was generated from coal-fired stations and they tended to be sited in the coalfields. More recently we have moved to gas-fired stations and the pipelines come in to the northeast coast."

Electricity is lost the further it is transmitted. It is estimated that supplying power to areas away from the power stations can absorb 10 per cent of the power generated. Prices charged to companies will in future reflect that loss.

Following a drop in gas prices in the July-September quarter, the fourth quarter of 1995 saw prices stabilise, according to the Times/Procord index of office costs. Mr Gardiner believes prices will start to move upwards again next month following the delayed introduction of the network code.

The two main increases in costs in the fourth quarter were in cleaning and reprographics, the index shows.

Cleaning saw a continuation of the rise in labour costs experienced through much of 1995 in what is a volatile labour market. Although the cost of cleaning materials stayed steady, the cost of cleaning rose 2 per cent.

Although the price of paper was more stable towards the end of the year, the cost of reprographics rose 3 per cent, with the high demand for this service pushing labour costs higher.

Mr Gardiner says: "The paper mills have been trying to raise the price further but this has been resisted. We are, however, likely to see a further increase in paper costs in the second or third quarter."

THE TIMES/PROCORD OFFICE COSTS INDEX

■ 3rd Quarter 1995 ■ 4th Quarter 1995

PROPERTY OPERATIONS - ANNUAL AVERAGE COSTS PER EMPLOYEE
Average Property Operations cost per employee: £1261 (up £24)

Maintenance	£305	£281
Utilities	£235	£205
Electricity	£235	£242
Gas	£237	£237
Water	£26	£26
Cleaning	£207	£211+£4
Security	£204	£204

SUPPORT SERVICES COSTS - ANNUAL AVERAGE COSTS PER EMPLOYEE
Average Support Services costs per employee: £2226 (down £14)

Communications	£306	£306
Reprographics	£359	£380+£11
Catering	£280	£280
Post Room	£268	£268
Transport	£242	£242
Other	£42	£42
Messengers/Porters	£93	£93
Office Equipment	£100	£100
Stationery	£104	£104
Reception	£21	£21

The Procord index does not include the following which are dependent on location: rent, rates, service charge, insurance and depreciation. It does not include any cost of small project work, furniture, information technology, telecommunications and VAT.

you know where to look. You do not need to use the same brand you have always used. Shop around and you can get some good deals. A lot of people just phone up and order for the sheer convenience and they pay the price."

The Times/Procord index showed a fourth quarter increase of £25 per employee to £1261 in the cost of property operations but a fall of £14 to £2226 in support services costs.

The index is compiled from information from more than 250 offices across the UK.

Telecommunications, already the highest support service cost, could see a rise in prices to businesses followed by a fall back almost to today's level, Mr Varcoe believes.

Communications presently costs £506 per office occupant each year, second only to maintenance within the overall facilities management remit. Currently The Times/Procord index shows costs being held down by the competitive market, with a number of cable and mobile operators making inroads into the main market. However, the demand for services is also growing rapidly.

Mr Varcoe says: "Paging, faxing and video-conferencing are gathering pace. I should not be surprised if 1996 is the year when it all takes off. A lot of investment is being made in PC-based systems. Increasingly it is not just specialist areas that are demanding specialist services. Businesses generally are seeing that they can use the Internet as a way of doing business and of promoting themselves."

Although the increased demand will give service providers the chance to raise prices in the short term, that will simply bring more service providers into the market, driving prices back down again, Mr Varcoe suggests. He sees a trend in the UK towards paying for the services rather than paying for the telephone line itself. That would reflect the position in America and places such as Singapore and Hong Kong, where local calls are free, and would give free access to the Internet.

Going for gas

Chesterton cooks up a deal with energy giant to boost efficiency

ue their careers in facilities management with a company which is keen to expand, but staff will also be given the option of taking voluntary redundancy. Some will be able to continue working for British Gas in another department.

Chesterton began to expand its facilities management business nearly two years ago. Acquisitions have included Consolidated FPM, Cyril Sweet and Bellingham.

The British Gas contract is expected to be for six years and is likely to be worth more than £100 million in the first year. There would be an option to extend the contract for three years.

British Gas has been keen to

contract out non-core operations, especially when loss of jobs can be avoided. Late last year Hoskyns, the computer services group, won a competitive tender to run information systems for British Gas for 18 months.

Hoskyns made a deliberate effort to persuade existing British Gas staff to come on to its books. Of the 1,150 affected, 600 have switched. The remainder have stayed with British Gas or taken voluntary redundancy.

Chris Moffat, executive director of Hoskyns, says: "We are delighted that so many skilled people have chosen to join us. The mission was to attract people to work with Hoskyns, but also to make other options as clear as possible."

Hoskyns is the British subsidiary of Cap Gemini Sogeti, which claims to be Europe's largest computer services company and the fifth largest in the world. Hoskyns has main offices in six British cities and in Dublin, plus a network of smaller offices and data centres.

The British Gas contract is estimated to be worth £55 million. British Gas is currently in the middle of a major corporate restructuring designed to save £600 million a year, part of which involves the closure of 14 data centres. But until new systems are in place, the task for Hoskyns will be to ensure that the existing systems continue to work efficiently.

New guides

THE British Institute of Facilities Management this month introduced two new guides free to members. The Facilities Management Measurement Guide sets out a common basis for defining an organisation's operations to allow comparisons between different sites and the Space Planning Guide explains the allocation and laying out of space and the role of planning. Non-members can obtain copies for £15 each from the BIFM on 01799 506608.

Results improve

CONSULTANTS employed a strong final quarter in 1995, according to figures from the Management Consultancies Association. Revenue of members totalled £365 million compared with £341 million in the third quarter. Order books also improved, leaving 81 per cent of members operating at full capacity. Growth has been strongest in the overseas sector and weakest

BRIEFS

In the public sector, retailing and construction and property.

Chapel contract

THE first supervision project for Mowlem's MEM Design unit under the construction, design and management legislation is the refurbishment of the 18th-century chapel at Clare College, Cambridge. Mowlem FM has also won the £8 million contract to maintain London Docklands Development Corporation's estates.

Net association

A TRADE association to represent Britain's Internet providers has been formed. The Internet Services Providers Association has 25 members under the chairmanship of Shez Hamill of Cablenet. The association's committee includes Chris Cain of Aladdin, Cindy Copey of Innotts, Peter Dawe of Pipex, Mark

Duddy of Dialnet, Nick Hobson of Bournemouth-Net, Aled Morris of Reuters and Richard Sharpe of Hiway.

Feeding 3,000

THE catering contract to feed 3,000 staff at the head office of Norwich Union, the insurance group, has been awarded to Nelson Hind Catering Management, adding more than £1.5 million to the turnover of the Rugby-based company.

Just the tickets

THE maintenance contract for the 232 automatic ticket printers at Stena, the shipping line, has been won by Preview Data Systems.

Correction

Richard Wilkins, of Symonds, is acting as an expert witness in a £12 million case, not Roger Williamson, of Liebert Europe, as stated on the Facilities Management page on December 20.

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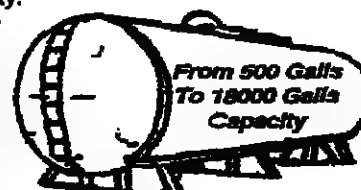
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مركز الأمل

Check your building now to see if it satisfies new legislation, Widget Finn advises

The Tate Gallery on Millbank, central London, hit the headlines during its Whistler exhibition when protesters demonstrated against the restricted number of wheelchairs allowed in the galleries.

"The problem arose because our own warders were responsible for evacuating wheelchair users in the event of a fire," Sandy Nairn, director of public and regional services for the Tate Gallery, says.

"The simple and common-sense solution which we've adopted is to move the wheelchair users to a designated safe place until they can be evacuated by the emergency services."

The Tate's Whistler and Dynasty exhibitions attracted an older audience than the regular visitors to contemporary shows, and their presence highlighted the need for good signing and generous circulation areas which would also benefit parents with small children and pushchairs.

New legal requirements and a lottery application have been the catalyst for the Tate to review its existing buildings in a drive to improve customer services.

Legislation and the lottery are forcing organisations to focus on whether their buildings are accessible to disabled people. An increasing number of organisations are conducting access audits to establish what adjustments they will have to make to bring their buildings in line with new regulations.

The criteria for lottery awards include suitable access so that everyone can make full use of a building. The Disability Discrimination Act — which goes on the statute books this month — is relevant to a much wider group, requiring all providers of goods and services to give "reasonable" access to disabled people. The definition of "reasonable" has yet to be clarified, and there is a ten-year period for alterations to be completed. There will be no brownie points for leaving compliance to the last minute and prudent organisations are already setting up programmes of improvement.

Initial government estimates that compliance with the new Act would cost British business £17 billion have been exposed as scaremongering. Many adjustments which

How to pass an access audit



Wheelchair users now have special access to the Tate Gallery via a side entrance

make a building accessible for disabled people cost little or nothing, says David Bonnett, an architect specialising in disability design. Often the key is good communications, such as installing clear signs or providing an information sheet about the building. Adjustments can be combined with regular repairs and included in standard budgets, Dr Bonnett adds.

"Incorporating vision panels on doors at wheelchair height, lowering door handles or raising electrical sockets can easily be done as part of a building's normal refurbishment," he says.

"Even redecoration provides an opportunity for improvements. Door openings can be highlighted by choosing contrasting colours, and laying the right carpet will make the distinction between vertical and horizontal planes clearer for people with physical impairments."

Some requirements, such as lifts or disabled toilets, will be expensive, says Dr Bonnett, but the trick is to look at the programme as a long-term plan and build in major items as part of your overall maintenance programme.

Organisations should not get too worried at the prospect of legislation, says Sarah Langton-Lockton, chief executive for the Centre for Accessible Environments, which provides information about access audits.

"An access audit is a starting point for getting to know the shortcomings of a building and drawing up a plan to remedy them," Ms Langton-Lockton says. "The cost of an audit is relatively small and an important investment in any early stage in the programme."

An initial half-day site meeting with the facilities manager

to discuss the problems is followed by a report which identifies the relevant areas and the resources which will be required. The cost for assessing a typical office building is about £1,500 and enables the organisation to judge the scale of work involved. Fees for the main audit conducted by a surveyor are about £2,000.

Improving access benefits more than just the disabled, which means that the cost can be spread among several budgets, according to Madeleine Collin, Oxford Brookes University, where Ms Collin is an adviser for disabled students, has two campuses. The hotchpotch of buildings are ill-suited to disabled people and also to Brookes's large population of mature students. The university wanted a strategic approach to access which could be completed in a ten-year rolling programme of work.

Its access audit recommended priority for low-cost adaptations, such as removing a couple of chairs in the lecture theatre to make proper space for wheelchairs and installing a hand-rail in the centre of wide steps.

"The university will cross-reference all future works by making the report available to the buildings and estate departments," Ms Collin says, "so that designing for disability is something we think about before rather than afterwards."

Dr Bonnett argues that a good access audit demonstrates the added value of improving access. The Tate Gallery's front entrance, approached by sweeping steps, is a daunting climb for anyone but the most agile. The general refurbishment scheme provides a wheelchair-accessible side entrance which places visitors — disabled or otherwise — nearer to the information desk, shop, cafe and toilets.

"Thoughtful design, like a non-slip floor surface or a sheltered entrance, benefits us all," Dr Bonnett says. "An access audit looks at how to make buildings more convenient and safer for everyone."

Information on access audits from the Centre for Accessible Environments (0171-357 8120). The Access Committee for England (0171-250 0008).

Make your move without a muddle

The biggest nightmare of moving a business from one location to another is how to handle computers and other sophisticated technical equipment.

A move will involve more than unplugging connections, carrying the equipment and floppy disks to the new site and then rewiring them. Obstacles — human, physical and technical — will have to be overcome. Back-up systems may be needed to keep the company working while on the move, and there is the issue of security — the loss through accident or theft of vital components.

Some managers think that relocating a company is just like moving house: a simple matter of a lorry and some men turning up to carry equipment from one place to another. Tony Leach, project manager for Hewlett-Packard's relocation team, says, "It is a highly complex operation which requires detailed planning and good communication. Some problems might be obvious, such as dealing with partitions erected after the technology was installed, but others can be more fundamental."

Hewlett-Packard provides a complete site survey of a company's new location and makes recommendations about power supplies, air conditioning, room layout and information technology. Its Relocation Services branch is part of the computing company's network integration services division, which is linked to the facilities management unit.

Among the moves it has achieved is one in south London for Mondial Assistance, the emergency system which provides 24-hour medical services. The logistics involved in this type of move are complex, Stuart Cadlock, Mondial's IT manager, says. "Through Relocation Services, we had only one point of

contact that covered all the suppliers involved in the move. This allowed for a smooth process which might otherwise have become confused through misunderstandings."

One point of contact and thorough planning are two of the rules of relocation set down by Nigel Dowler, marketing manager of Hewlett-Packard's network integration services division. Mondial's change was achieved by moving the technology in two operations. Some equipment remained at the old location while the rest was installed as part of an upgraded data and

have enough computers and space for 20 people, to take over the basic data functions of a company during a move.

Care and security must also be considered in moving delicate technical equipment. When the path is clear, air-cushioned platforms with protective edges are brought in to carry the computers. If the equipment needs to negotiate stairs, a device called an electronic stair-climber with caterpillar tracks and protective corners is employed.

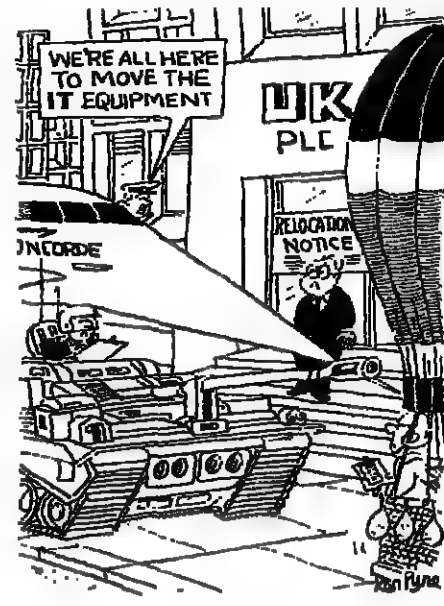
Strategic equipment is often divided into two loads for journeys from one site to another. "We would hardly be doing our job properly if a client lost all its equipment in the unlikely event of a lorry crash or ferry disaster," Mr Leach says.

"This safety-first approach can have its own problems, however. French lorry drivers started a blockade of the Channel ports while we were moving a company from England to France. One computer load beat the blockade but the other was stuck on a ferry."

A new set of problems surrounds relocations from one country to another. Customs officers can be extremely suspicious of IT equipment. "The US Customs is always concerned about computers coming in from Eastern Europe, and the only way of avoiding lengthy delays is to make sure that every conceivable piece of paperwork has been properly done," Mr Dowler says.

He and his team have to cope with differing power and telephone networks during international moves. The experts also find that when multinationals are consolidating their operations in a new centre, departments from different countries move at varying paces and allowances must be made for this.

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HUNT FOR THE MISSING MILLIONS: PART FOUR

The toys and trappings of a tycoon

The helicopter took off and vanished into the clouds

The toys, as Arthur Andersen's administrators affectionately refer to them, included the *Lady Ghislaine*, two executive Gulfstream jets and a helicopter.

Robert Maxwell's helicopter, a twin Squirrel, was traditionally parked on the roof of Maxwell House in London's New Fetter Lane. Peter Tuch, project managing the administration, harboured misgivings.

There was little evidence to suggest that Maxwell's private interests had any right to use the MCC building. More to the point, the "private side" owed funds to MCC. Would Price Waterhouse, MCC's administrators, dare to seize the gleaming blue and white toy that sported a red MGN lion?

Under the circumstances, the practitioner (it takes one to know one) decided to transfer the helicopter to the vicinity of Heathrow.

From his eighth floor office in Arthur Andersen's Surrey Street headquarters, John Talbot, masterminding recovery operations, enjoyed a clear view of Maxwell House. Talbot knew of Tuch's concerns but was unaware of the pending transfer.

Tales are still told of how Talbot looked up from his desk and watched, horrified, as one of his precious assets took off and vanished into the clouds. Fearing a hijack, the speed of Talbot's descent to Tuch's office broke all records. Interest in Maxwell's Squirrel did not break all records and the chopper was finally sold for some £250,000 in the autumn of 1992.

The *Lady Ghislaine*, named after Maxwell's youngest daughter, was one of the media mogul's best-known assets. When MCC launched its \$2.35 billion takeover bid for Macmillan Inc, the US publishing house, in 1988, Maxwell chose the yacht as the venue for a press conference. To guarantee an audience, the Cap'n jettied half a dozen journalists out of Heathrow to Bastia, on the Corsican coast, where the 180 ft yacht was moored. Maxwell depicted MCC as a "white knight", rescuing the publishing house from the ruthless clutches of Robert Bass, a Texas investor. Journalists, padding around the decks in stocking feet, noted this. They also noted that the *Lady Ghislaine* was linked by fax, telephone and satellite to numerous parts of the Maxwell empire: parts that others at sea might not reach. Deck phones were programmed to merchant banks in New York and London. Another line connected Maxwell with the *Daily Mirror* newsroom from where, he let it be known, he could receive a copy of the newspaper's front page at the same time as the editor.

Maxwell bought the yacht

for £15 million from the family of Adnan Khashoggi, the arms dealer, in 1987. Distractions from the front page of the *Daily Mirror* included a gymnasium, a disco, a glass-bottomed Jacuzzi on the sun deck, whirlpools and a cinema. When the administrators inherited the yacht it was moored in Palma, de Majorca, running up costs of around \$70,000 a month. Steve Peacock, an accountant, was dispatched, with a lawyer, to ensure the vessel was secure. To Peacock's dismay, the yacht yielded up few of Maxwell's secrets, despite the presence of two Chubb safes.

Neither Martin Fishman nor his colleagues were experienced in the disposal of yachts, particularly those chartered by the likes of Frank Sinatra. In the event, it was decided to transfer the *Lady Ghislaine* to Antibes, in the South of France, and market her through Camper and Nicholson, the brokers. Given that Maxwell had spent his last hours aboard the boat, the administrators were warned that little interest could be expected from the superstitious Japanese and Chinese. This proved correct.

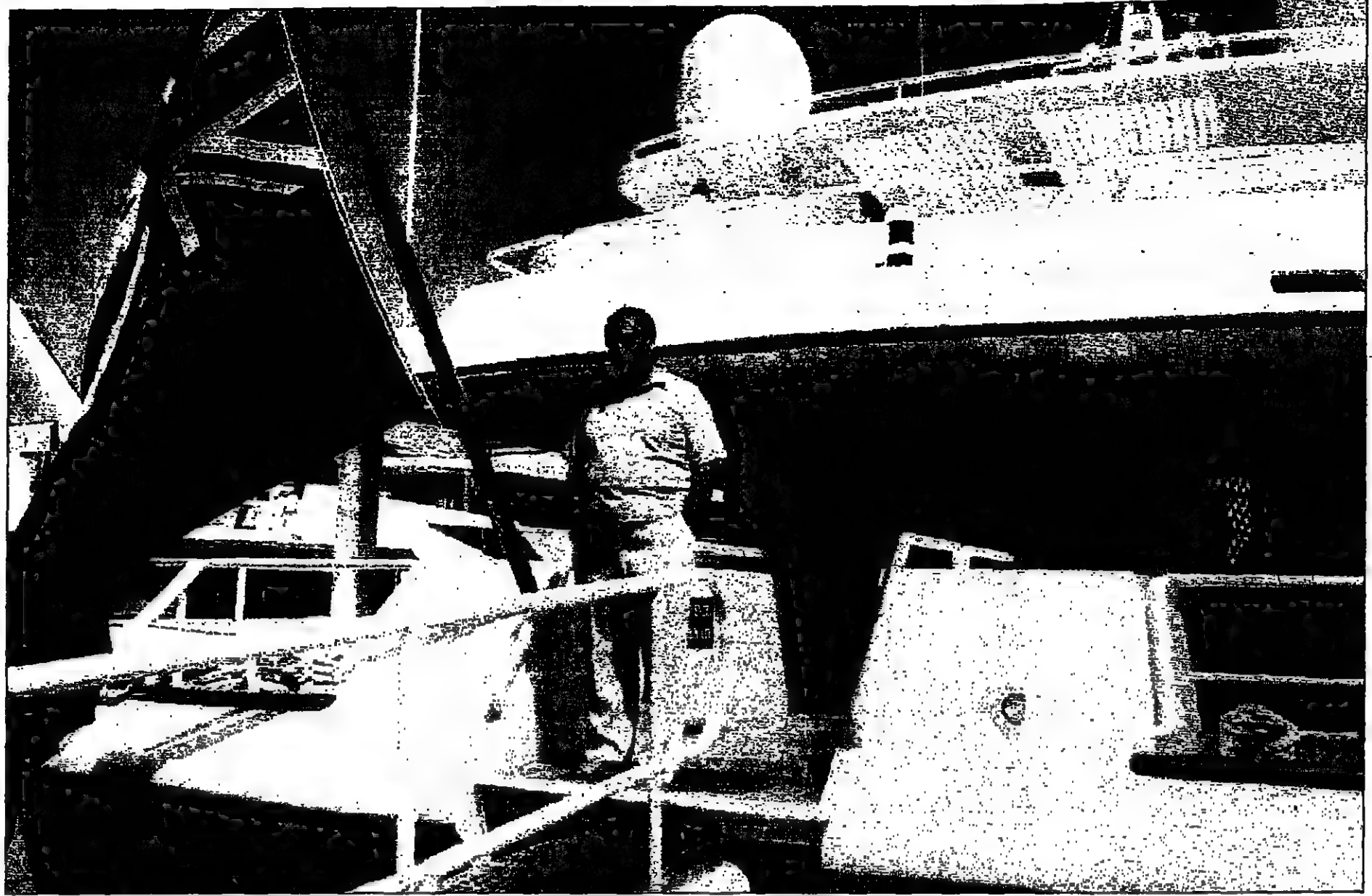
The John Barmenburgh creation, built by the Dutch Amels yard, proved the subject of a Camper and Nicholson brochure, complete with 24 glossy colour photographs. Camper and Nicholson objected strongly to a photo of a rival shipbroker's Cowes office. The caption read: "Guard rail mended."

Fishman recalls "considerable interest" complicated by the fact that, because principals invariably wanted to remain anonymous, negotiations had to be conducted through intermediaries.

The yacht, originally put up for sale at a "guideline" price of \$19.75 million, is reputed to have been sold to a Saudi businessman for nearer \$12 million. Arthur Andersen, bound and gagged by confidentiality agreements, refuse to be drawn on these details.

When Tuch asked Maxwell's pilot why his former chief kept two jets, he was informed that the Gulfstream GII was a spare, used if the GIV was under repair. "Mr Maxwell didn't like to be without his plane," the GIV, valued at some \$20 million, was perceived as the Rolls-Royce of executive jets, not least by its owner. Cleaners were encouraged to "buff" this particular toy.

The GIV is thought to have been sold (complete with confidentiality agreements) to a South American company for close on the \$20 million asking price. The GII, having reached its "sell by" date, is believed to have gone to a US broker for something less than the \$3 million asking price.



The Cap'n aboard the *Lady Ghislaine*. He flew journalists out to the 180ft yacht, moored off Corsica, to launch MCC's \$2.35 billion bid for Macmillan Inc

Unpaid employees helped to keep The European's presses rolling

Martin Fishman, one of Arthur Andersen's four administrators, found himself contemplating the plight of *The European* on Thursday, December 5, 1991. This European venture was one of Robert Maxwell's pet projects, launched with characteristic razzmatazz in the spring of 1990.

Fishman's first tête-à-tête was with Ian Maxwell, chairman of the loss-making enterprise. What Fishman wanted to know was: could *The European* stand alone amid the corporate debris and continue to publish? The essence of Ian Maxwell's reply was "no". *The European* was short of cash and would not be able to meet its salary obligations. Mirror Group Newspapers provided the production facilities that were crucial to the newspaper's survival. Further inquiries revealed that Robert Maxwell had poured some £50 million into *The European*, where losses were running at £1 million a month on a circulation of 250,000. Against this backdrop, the directors agreed to petition for administration.

Fishman's next tête-à-tête took place that evening with John Bryant, editor of *The European*, and now deputy editor of *The Times*. Fishman recalls a tense gathering with half a dozen senior journalists in Bryant's office. The issue for Friday, December 6, had come out, but a question mark hung over the next week's edition. Fishman explained

that any staff retained by the administrators would be paid, but drastic cost cuts were required. Bryant decided to shelve the Elan section of the newspaper. Urgent talks with MGN saw printing operations abandoned in France and the US. Production was confined to the UK and Germany.

Bryant spent the weekend grappling with the almost insurmountable problem of how to carry out the necessary staff cuts and still produce a newspaper. On Monday, Bryant convinced Fishman that

the newspaper could not be brought out without contributions from many of the journalists from the guillotine. It would appear only if the staff agreed to work without pay. The message, delivered by Bryant and Fishman at a hastily convened meeting, was that survival was possible if the paper remained on the street. There would be no pay, jobs would be lost, but some might be saved if *The European* was kept alive. Fishman acknowledges

that Bryant's speech marked a turning point. "It was a dramatic moment. The troops rallied round. That was when the mood changed, the adrenalin started to flow."

He adds: "We had to complete four sides of a square. To save the paper, we needed the journalists, the production facility, the distribution system, and the advertising operation. If one fell, the paper fell."

Numerous problems dogged production of the December 13 issue, not least a threat by certain freelance journal-

ists, who had not been paid for earlier work, to issue an injunction if their copy was used. Although the 84th issue of *The European* appeared, fears mounted that it would prove the last. Bryant left to join *The Times* and Fishman made 145 staff redundant.

Ambushed by journalists and photographers on the evening of December 12, Fishman declared: "If the paper had not come out, we would not be in a position to negotiate. We are still hopeful of a sale." At this point, talks

with an interested party started to progress, a development that encouraged Fishman to give a green light for the December 20 issue. No issue was envisaged for December 27, a holiday period that served to give *The European* a breathing space.

With costs significantly reduced, the loss was now "manageable". On New Year's Eve, the administrators, on Fishman's advice, guaranteed production of the next four issues. This offered potential purchasers a running start.

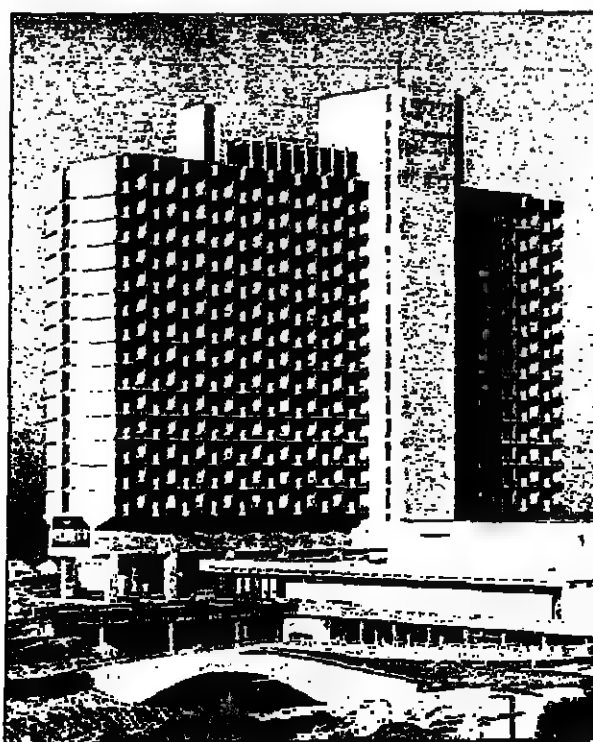
Days later, on Friday, January 2, the phone rang in Fishman's office. The message, from Greg McLeod, Fishman's manager, was: "I've got someone downstairs who wants to buy." "Is he serious?" retorted Fishman. "He's got a banker's draft in his pocket and a lawyer by his side," came the reply. Other interested parties were informed that a deal was in the offing. Later, Fishman departed to Allen & Overy's City offices to work through the night on a contract of sale — signed at 8am on Saturday.

Enter the Barclay brothers — David and Frederick — as the new proprietors of *The European*. In keeping with their low-profile image, the Barclays, who reside in Monte Carlo, have never divulged the price paid for *The European*. Speculation has it that the twins, owners of the Ritz and London's Howard Hotel, bought their first newspaper free of debt for significantly less than £5 million.



Martin Fishman, left, and John Bryant, then editor of *The European*, on the night the 84th edition was brought out

The long goodbye to Ma'ariv in Israel



Rooms at the Tel Aviv Hilton were 'swept' for bugs

I took Alan Katz, a partner in Arthur Andersen's Leeds office, one day in Israel to decide that operation Ma'ariv required reinforcements to the four-man contingent that had boarded the first flight from Heathrow to Tel Aviv on Thursday, December 5, 1991. Hours before the firm's annual jamboree on the Saturday, Richard Fleming and two colleagues from the Leeds office received a summons to the Middle East. The trio wined and dined at Ripley Castle until late, when they bowed out in order to catch a 7am flight to Tel Aviv. They let it be known that they would be away for a fortnight. In the event, the assignment lasted three months.

Maxwell's "private side", via Maxwell Media Trust, held an 85 per cent stake in the Ma'ariv Mod'in Publishing House, which controlled Ma'ariv, Israel's second largest daily newspaper after *Yedioth Aharonot*. All in all, the business encompassed some 20 offshoots with a turnover of \$70 million and net assets of \$15 million. It took Robert Maxwell two years to secure his 85 per cent grip on Ma'ariv Mod'in and absolute control was not clinched until September 1991 — a matter of weeks before his death. Maxwell's original \$30 million purchase price had been agreed after a 40-minute meeting. Ma'ariv's managers and various outside shareholders held the outstanding 15 per cent stake.

Katz's priority was to protect the business and place a value on it. With net assets of \$15 million, the 85 per cent stake commanded a face value of

\$12.75 million. Ma'ariv possessed significant potential, but was seriously under-capitalised and urgently required a cash injection of some \$10 million.

Industrial espionage came to light soon after Katz set up base. Workmen appeared to fix phones and lavatories. This rang alarm bells, not least because such facilities had shown no visible signs of malfunction. A security firm was called in to "sweep" the rooms at the Tel Aviv Hilton and the team's office on a daily basis. Several microphones and cameras were uncovered. Katz

Canadian newspaper combine, made no secret of his ambition to add Ma'ariv to the English language *Jerusalem Post* that he had acquired in 1989. Dov Judkovsky, editor of Ma'ariv, and Aharon Dovrat, a director — both of whom had been close to Maxwell — spearheaded one of several Israeli consortiums. Also to the fore was the Israel Land Development Company, controlled by Ya'akov Nimrodi, the former Israeli military attaché in Iran who featured in the Irangate arms controversy.

Ma'ariv's banks — owed some \$30 million —

been granted to third parties. Katz recalls how, when certain inconsistencies were queried, the letter was abruptly withdrawn.

The most serious problem related to the pre-emption rights of certain shareholders. Interested parties, with no shareholding, were reluctant to carry out due diligence for fear that, if they made an acceptable offer, they would be ambushed by a shareholder with pre-emption rights. Late nights with lawyers, examining Israeli legislation and the pre-emption agreements, finally yielded a scheme designed to force the hands of holders of pre-emption rights and the external bidders. The accountants created a "pewco" called Marline, a subsidiary of Maxwell Media Trust, as a vehicle to launch an \$18 million offer for the 85 per cent share block. This would set the clock ticking for shareholders to exercise their pre-emption rights.

This ingenious device, greeted with not a little indignation, served its purpose and duly promoted cross-party discussions. Late one February evening, Fleming telephoned Katz in the UK to seek final approval to strike a deal. Shortly after, reports broke that Nimrodi, working in harness with Shimon Cheizik, Ma'ariv's managing director who held an 8 per cent stake, had outbid Black with an offer of around \$14.5 million.

6 Members of the team were regularly followed and intimidating phone calls were made to their families

recalls how staff were regularly followed as they left the hotel or went to lunch. More alarming, for the Tel Aviv team, was a series of intimidating phone calls to their families in the UK.

News of Maxwell's death had plunged Ma'ariv into a chapter of power-plays. Management, or associated factions, were variously considering a management buyout, attempting to launch a new newspaper, grappling with a cashflow crisis and negotiating with strike-threatening unions.

A blast of media publicity greeted Katz & Co's arrival and several parties expressed interest. Conrad Black, chairman of Hollinger, the

were eager to improve their respective positions, not least because many had relied, in part, on guarantees from other Israeli companies associated with Maxwell. Discussions revealed that Maxwell had negatively pledged his shares to the banks, a manoeuvre that meant the banks effectively enjoyed a right of veto over a potential purchaser of the 85 per cent share block.

To complicate matters further, a document, dated one week after Maxwell's death, came to light. This purportedly recorded a meeting held two weeks before Maxwell's death at which additional pre-emption rights appeared to have

Tomorrow: the final part of Hunt for the Missing Millions

Losses across the board

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1989				1988			
Rank	Company	Price	%	Rank	Company	Price	%
98	+	-	95	98	+	-	95
BANKS							
202	Bank of America	50.0	0	167	Bank of America	47.0	0
203	Bank of America	49.0	0	168	Bank of America	46.0	0
204	Bank of America	48.0	0	169	Bank of America	45.0	0
205	Bank of America	47.0	0	170	Bank of America	44.0	0
206	Bank of America	46.0	0	171	Bank of America	43.0	0
207	Bank of America	45.0	0	172	Bank of America	42.0	0
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هكذا امن الفصل



MUSIC 1
A violinist for all seasons: Gidon Kremer brings a feast of fiddle music to London



MUSIC 2
Robert King brings the period touch to a programme of Italian Baroque rarities

THE TIMES ARTS



VISUAL ART
Will Christopher Frayling, the 'Kenneth Clark of pop culture', gets the top job at the RCA?



MIME
The Ralf Ralf brothers find much to be surreal about in international diplomacy

Sounds with a bite

FANTASTIC. The experimental double act Ralf Ralf is electrifyingly dextrous. Brothers Jonathan and Barnaby Stone seamlessly meld silent gesture, gibberish and gymnastics, political satire, percussive rhythms, and a cappella chanting. *The Summit*, their razor-sharp and very funny vision of international negotiations — first inspired by the thawing Cold War but of startling current pertinence — is to be made into a film. I can't wait. Meanwhile, I shall be dashing back to the BAC for replays of the live version, part of the London International Mime Festival and BAC's strong Physical And Visual Theatre Season.

The Summit
BAC, SW11

ic the rhetorical tricks of political speechmakers with merciless precision: the chatty kick-off, the ironic pause with raised eyebrow, the ranting crescendo, the sudden cut to hushed visionary tones. Communist or capitalist, Labour or Tory, these arch-enemies are talking gobbledegook. And yet we understand them perfectly.

The scenes are snapshots, more like musical movements in fact. At one point, the two men circle their long conference table, approaching each other warily and backing away in what might be a childish game, a cockfight or a courtship dance.

Elsewhere the planning of fists on the table develops into a complex drumming duet of rapping knuckles and slapping palms. Foot stamping, Romany-style or just plain furious, intertwines aggression with the suggestion of close cultural roots. The men harmonise, but competitively.

Ralf Ralf's work is not just beautifully phrased and polished. *The Summit* invests its performance styles (mime, nonsense-speak or music) with pointed meaning, attaining far-reaching social and political significance. This place might be Bosnia, Ireland, anywhere. Flabbergastingly skilful, the gibberish embraces flickers of heated Italian that blur into Indian.

The party-political speechmakers shift into incanting priests, Catholic or Muslim. Out of an African tribal chorus, its pulse built from breaths, rises a Celtic tune.

Lastly there is the silence. A vast sense of bleakness, as well as peace, wells up when these two men stop speaking and go to stand in their far corners, caught under narrow beams of light, apparently listening for orders from on high.

KATE BASSETT

Violinist Gidon Kremer is to explore his world in a special series of concerts. John Allison reports

The innovator takes his bow

Gidon Kremer is one of the outstanding violinists of our day — and much more. His distinctive artistry and the way in which he has led music in new directions are testimony to a holistic approach rare among even his finest colleagues. On Saturday he appears in London for the first part of the Philharmonia Orchestra's Gidon Kremer Series, four concerts of exceptional interest that will nevertheless reveal only a few aspects of his repertoire.

Spaced comfortably over the next few months — the series continues until early June — the concerts also give little idea of what, by Kremer's own admission, is his "crazy life".

When we met in Lille one afternoon last week he was still unsure of where to the city he would be playing the Brahms Violin Concerto that evening. He had arrived from Strasbourg having performed the same work the night before, and was moving on to Paris for a chamber music concert the following day.

He spends ten months of the year travelling and seems to thrive on it: "To do so much wonderful music is refreshing," he says. Kremer, who was born in Riga into a Jewish-German-Swedish family, finds it hard to establish where home really is. "I should consider myself somewhat Latvian: having spent the first 18 years of my life there, and having played my first concert there. But I spent 15 years in Moscow, and when I was first allowed out to play in the West I was often looked upon as a Soviet violinist, whatever that meant. I admit that Russian culture and the Russian 'soul' became very dear to me. I give all credit to my education in Moscow, to my many colleagues there who influenced my way in music."

He gives credit above all to his violin teacher for eight years in Moscow, the great David Oistrakh, who influenced both his musical thinking and his mastery of the instrument. "I was very lucky to be so close to such a man. The main thing I learned from Oistrakh was that you have to be well-equipped technically. It doesn't help just to be musically gifted — without the 'apparatus' of playing, you can't convert feelings or thoughts into sounds."

"I also learnt that a great artist can be generous with his ideas. Oistrakh was never dogmatic, and he established a good rapport with his many different students on the basis of their individual talents. I think he gained confidence in the way I developed, even though as a musician and violinist I was very different to him."

THE Purcell tercentenary is over and the King's Consort is set to explore other terrain: a series of recordings of Vivaldi's sacred music is planned, and Italian composers dominated their programme at the Wigmore Hall. Robert King and his Consort have always belonged to the polite school of Purcell performance, but will they be able to bring more passion to the Italian masters of the Baroque?

On the basis of this concert, the answer would appear to be no. Some years ago they might have got away with performances like these, with the blandness being laid at the composers' door. But now the competition is much tougher, and not only from British chamber groups with real interpretative flair like Romanesco or the Palladian Ensemble. The Italians have discovered historically-aware performance and are bringing a new and vibrant approach to the music of their past. Concerto Italiano, L'Europa Galante and the Accademia Bizantina are now interpreting this repertoire with formidable panache, bringing to it a sense of conviction that was lacking from this concert.

Perhaps it was from Oistrakh that Kremer inherited his broad artistic outlook. "Many aspects of music interest me, but no more than the visual arts and drama. And I'm not a violin freak. I used to listen to recordings of violinists — it was important to hear someone like Heifetz reaching for more than just efficiency or beauty, reaching out for something divine — but I don't any longer. I can't tell you anything about my colleagues!"

Kremer must know, though, that he has one of the biggest repertoires in the business, stretching from new works back to before Bach. "I look into the museum of music and realise that much of it is still very contemporary. I'm not on terms with 'authentic' playing, because to me what matters is original music-making, and unfortunately this is more seldom to be found than people playing on original instruments. It's not the method of producing art that is important, but the results."

He devotes much time to chamber music, and admits he will "use any occasion to do so". Indeed, two regular partners — the pianist Martha Argerich and cellist Mischa Maisky — will be joining him for a concert of three Russian trios presented as part of the Philharmonia's series.

There is also his chamber music festival at Lockenhaus in Austria, which serves as a forum for young artists who then tour under the title Kremerata Musica. Deutsche Grammophon, his record company, issued the first Kremerata Musica disc only last week.

Kremer's concerts with the Philharmonia will include both the Brahms and Tchaikovsky concertos, but also music by several composers from the former Soviet Union. "I'm so attached to music of the past that I'll never allow myself to be labelled a 20th-century specialist. But I think it is my duty not just to be a customer of the works museum. I have to follow the pattern of my teacher and many others in keeping music alive by making all possible ties with today's composers. And I don't like to restrict myself to one style — I find my disappointments and pleasures in all kinds of music."

Saturday's performance is to be preceded by a free concert in which Kremer will present two works dear to him: a double concerto for violin and piano entitled *Nevertheless* by the Latvian Georgs Pelecis, a friend from school days, and *V and V*, a piece by the Georgian Gitya Kanchell for violin and taped voice. Kanchell re-appears in the final concert with his more substantial *Lament*. Schnittke is represented by his Violin Concerto No 4, one of several works he has written for Kremer.

There are intriguing rarities, too, including Stravinsky's arrangements of two pieces from *Sleeping Beauty* which feature a solo violin, and Kremer's own arrangements of arias from Arthur Lourié's unperformed Pushkin opera, *The Blackamoor of*



"If I was looking only for accessible works, I would go into the pop scene," says Gidon Kremer

Peter the Great, a work he is keen to promote. Kremer describes the Pelecis and Kanchell pieces as "sincere and very accessible — although that is not the point. If I was looking only for accessible works, I would go into the pop scene. But audiences have to be encouraged to lose their reservations about new music."

"Contemporary music should not just be for snobs," he continues. "Of course, some composers are using music for self-promotion, but in real music you can't cover up your soul. Whatever your style, if you have something to say it will be sensed — and if you have nothing to say that will be sensed too."

● The Gidon Kremer Series begins at the Festival Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (0171-960 4206) on Saturday

Let's hear it for the bland

CONCERT

King's Consort
Wigmore Hall

Hundreds of cantatas by Alessandro Scarlatti survive, and while it would be fair to say that his inspiration was less consistent than that of Bach or Handel, he could, nevertheless, compose some very fine music. Take, for instance, the astonishingly expressive aria "Infelici Miei Lumi" from *Su Le Sponde Del Tevere*, or the lyrical concluding Pastoral from the Christmas cantata *O Di Betlemme Altera*. Here the former was marred by sour intonation in the violins, while the latter, for want of any real shaping, lost its way like the sheep it urged the shepherds to forsake. In both cantatas, the soprano Deborah York was the soloist. Her bright-toned, pure voice is ideally suited to this repertoire, although she needs to get more under the skin of the

stylistic idiom, and the inflections of the language. James Bowman took the solos in settings of the *Salve Regina* by Haase and Scarlatti. Bowman's appearance never seems to change, but his voice is, sadly, beginning to lack its former sustaining power and flexibility.

The violins, still only one to a part, perked up for Geminiani's Concerto Grosso in E minor (Op 3), but elsewhere even Crispian Steele-Perkins's trumpet-playing sounded too casual. The King's Consort cannot afford to be so complacent right now.

TESS KNIGHTON

Christopher Frayling is odds-on to be the next head of the RCA — if he can fit it into his schedule. Simon Tait reports



"The place has become more thoughtful": Christopher Frayling, polymath Pro-Rector of the Royal College of Art.

Ideas man whose time has come

THE Royal College of Art, according to Christopher Frayling, is going through a period of legato — "smooth and connected, without breaks" — according to the dictionary — after a decade of staccato which included the seven-year reign of Jocelyn Stevens, when almost every head of department left the college. Frayling, the sole survivor, was widely expected to be Stevens's successor as Rector three years ago, but instead the sculptor Anthony Jones was brought in from Chicago.

Now Jones has resigned, returning to America to care for his sick son. His successor will be named by May. Frayling must be the favourite again, but he says he may not be in the running.

Much has changed since 1993 for the man Huw Wheldon once called the Kenneth Clark of pop culture. He is now Pro-Rector, which makes him head of the academic side of the college, which he loves. He is the longest-serving Arts Council member, chairman of its film

and photography panel, and of the V&A board of trustees. He has also developed a more public role as the nation's cultural historian, ubiquitous on radio and television.

His radio series on Hollywood's cockeyed way with history, called *Print the Legend*, has just ended, and next month he finishes filming a four-part history of horror for BBC1. These are merely the latest in a long line of books and broadcasts on subjects ranging from films — it was he who invented the phrase "spaghetti western" — to Tutankhamun, medieval history, vampires and Byron.

And now he is tackling the RCA itself. He is behind the huge *Design of the Times* exhibition which opens at the college on February 7 to celebrate its centenary — or is it centenary-and-a-half plus a bit more? Nine years ago Frayling wrote a book called *The Royal College of Art: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art and Design*, for the place was going for 59 years as the Government School of Design

before it was renamed. "The RCA is the longest experiment in design ever," Frayling says. "Bauhaus was 1919 to 1931 and Ulm was the 1960s, but we started in 1837 and are still trying things out. The exhibition will show that in the 1980s design was becoming a lot more confident: it was a time of big ideas. In the 1990s the place has become much more thoughtful."

When the college started, design was a matter of receiving cratesful of white, unadorned pots from Stoke and painting flowers on them. Then came Christopher Dresser, a student and lecturer at the college, whose designs presaged the Arts and Crafts Movement. In the early 20th century Charles Sargeant Jagger was the leader of popular taste, designing innumerable memorial statues after the First World War.

In 1940 the college was evacuated to Ambleside, Cumbria, where everyone became a landscape painter and the

students doing their Home Guard training created sheep disguises for themselves. Later, British Pop Art was born here, and the late Mark Boxer, founder editor of *The Sunday Times Magazine*, said that the phenomenon of newspaper colour supplements was inspired by the RCA's publication, *Ark*. Then came post-modernism, and the exhibition has a typical piece from the "sacred" 1980s: a slow fan, a useless object whose virtues lie in the design notion. To illustrate the legato 1980s there is a startling electronic contraceptive, said to be more effective and safer than the Pill.

"Students are worried about the planet now, about animal rights, about their future," Frayling says. "It's a much more grown-up sort of place than it was in the 1980s. Even today, 70 per cent of the work done here is design."

● Design of the Times, sponsored by L.G. Electronics, is at the Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London SW7 (0171-584 5030) from Feb 7-March 20



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HERITAGE
Was Sir Francis Drake, who died 400 years ago, the great captain of legend or a third-rate pirate?



OPERA
The state of Utah celebrates its centenary by commissioning and premiering a new opera

THE TIMES ARTS



OFFER
See the new Athol Fugard play at the Duke of York's, at Times Theatre Club prices



TOMORROW
Whitney Houston in *Waiting to Exhale*, De Niro in *Heat*: the new films reviewed by Geoff Brown

Full houses grow beside Salt Lake

Rodney Milnes sees the first work commissioned by the ever-expanding Utah Opera

Utah Opera starts with a number of advantages, not least the beautiful, 100-year-old Capitol Theatre in Salt Lake City, lovingly restored to proper use after a period as a department store. To walk from a typical downtown cityscape into this cream and gold riot of Edwardian Baroque, its chandeliers a-glitter, its 1,900-seat auditorium cosy and welcoming, is slightly unnerving — from America to Europe in one step. It is an invaluable facility.

The young company, founded in 1978 by the tenor Glade Peterson, is now run by the director Anne Ewers. It has grown prudently, currently presenting five performances each of three mainly bread-and-butter operas — *Salome* is the most modern piece staged in the Capitol, although Britten's church parables have been given in duly ecclesiastical settings.

This prudence, plus a top ticket price of \$45 going down to \$12, has won it a loyal audience. There is an 86 per cent subscription base, and for the past five years all performances have been sold out. So next season the company will expand its repertoire to four operas. The laws of supply and demand come into it as well as prudence.

This year it has celebrated the centenary of Utah's statehood by making one of the three operas its first commissioned world premiere, David Carlson's *Dreamkeepers*. Again, the prudence and practicality guiding the project are striking — no casting of bonnets over windmills here. *Dreamkeepers* comes in at less than 90 minutes' music split into two acts; there are only four principal characters, plus a large chorus.

It would be easy to pursue your lips at Carlson's unashamedly neo-romantic musical language, but more profitable to note that he handles his chosen idiom with unobtrusive technical skill — pace, dramatic shape, balance; all are persuasively handled — and he writes for voice and large orchestra with total confidence. His last opera, *The Midnight Angel* (premiered in Saint Louis in 1993), was hampered by a trivial libretto; this is an infinitely better work.

The text by Aden Ross, poet and playwright of local fame, shows signs of having been severely compressed, and all to the good — the music is firmly in command. Again, it would be easy to balk at some passages of "creative writing", at others nearer the world of Oscar Hammerstein II than that of Hofmannsthal, and to note that the whole constitutes a monument to political correctness.

The heroine is Ela, a Ute Native American returning from the city to her reservation. Her grandmother represents the old Ute order, memories of past persecution still vivid (the programme contains turn-of-the-century photographs of Ute children forced into European school uniforms as part of an "education" project and looking perfectly miserable).

A baritone government agent takes on assorted villain roles, rather after the manner of *Death in Venice*. The tenor hero, a doctor, has failed Ela in an earlier relationship, but returns to try again, and is involved in a car crash at the end of the first act.

In the second act Ela descends to the spirit world, at grandmother's behest, to rescue him, the gender roles of Orpheus and Eurydice neatly reversed. After much theatrical coming to terms with the past, the opera ends with a multi-racial chorus of affirmation that, by comparison, makes Bernstein's *Make our garden grow* sound like a dirge from the Slough of Despond. But it worked: the audience rose to a standing ovation, and even before Saturday's premiere there was not a seat to be had for any of the five performances.

Ewers directed efficiently on Michael Downs's sun-baked set, and the authenticity of the Ute costumes was guaranteed by advisers from the tribe, who also attended the premiere in spectacular attire.

Juliana Gondek coped affectingly with the soprano role; Debra Brown, last heard here in the Kupfer *Elektra* in Cardiff, was the grandmother; Brian Montgomery made an eminently hissable villain, and Tonio di Paolo, a ringing tenor with brilliant diction, a memorable hero. Stirring choral singing and playing from the Utah Symphony under the émigré Scottish conductor Stewart Robertson set the seal on an incontrovertible success story.

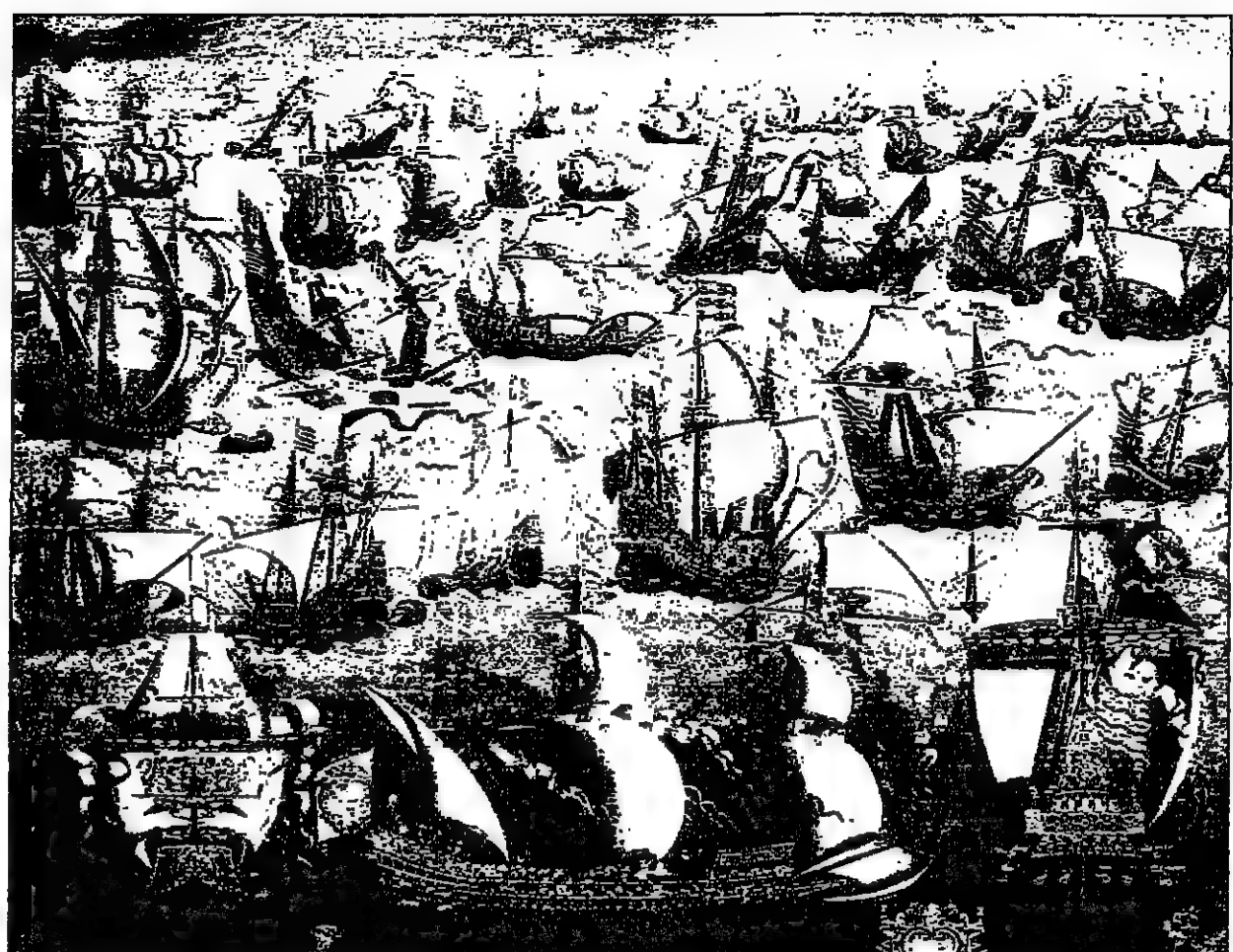
Peter Davies assesses the fluctuating reputation of Sir Francis Drake, who died 400 years ago

A lie on the ocean wave?

Historians have long been at work to erode the reputation of that quasi-mythological figure Sir Francis Drake. His tactics have been criticised, his sense of strategy impugned and his contribution to the defeat of the Armada belittled. Already before the Second World War the iconoclastic Herbert Butterfield had assailed the received view of history which saw the events of 1588 as part of Protestant England's libertarian stand against authoritarian Catholicism. Even the impeccably patriotic H.A.L. Fisher had murmured *sotto voce* that Drake was perhaps not quite the commander the Spanish Main was no substitute for capturing a port like Cartagena and getting on with a systematic campaign.

This process of denigration reached its apogee on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the defeat of the Armada. At that point the prime guardian of our nautical heritage, the National Maritime Museum, appeared to enter the fray as devil's advocate supreme. Its booklet about the Armada failed to mention Drake's name once. English preparations to face the enemy were described as "chaotic", in marked contrast to the "expert" tactics apparently being employed on the other side of the Channel by the Duke of Parma. And then the cat was let out of the bag: the Spanish Ambassador was discovered to be on the museum's exhibition committee.

Middle, not to speak of maritime, England had had enough. Howls of execration rose in response to the announcement of commemorative events that seemed designed to bury for ever the reputation of one of England's most famous sons. In the taverns of patriotic Plymouth and Deptford, the Tower was darkly spoken of as the only fit place for the director of the National Maritime Museum.



English ships and the Spanish Armada, August 1588, which is included in the National Maritime Museum show

Three navigators of widely different eras and character are yoked together by the exhibition. Drake remains the darling/ruffian of the seas, and the chancer *par excellence*. Captain James Cook was a meticulous navigator, who brought the scientific habits of the 18th century to everything he did, including care for his men's health. Sir John Franklin was blooded at Trafalgar, went on to serve in Britain's first steam-propelled ships and developed the passion for the search for the North-West Passage which was to lead him to a frozen death. But these three were united in one thing: that streak of ruthless obstinacy which was a necessary concomitant of (literally in their case) putting themselves on the map.

With Drake it is not necessary to gild the lily. He had begun his seafaring career in earnest in the slave trade between the Guinea coast and the West Indies with his cousin John Hawkins. The clashes with the Spaniards which made both famous were nothing to do with patriotic pride. They were born out of the desire to break a commercial monopoly.

Clearly Drake was a skilled ship handler and tactician. The Spaniards were prodigiously wary of him and his hauls of treasure from their galleons were immense. Queen Elizabeth's fragile treasury was only too glad to get its share. But when hit-and-run piracy was required to

transform itself into regular naval operations, it was a different matter. There was no Commander-in-Chief Fleet to co-ordinate logistics. Controlling, as they did, so much of the Central and South American littoral, the Spaniards were actually in an impregnable position when the freebooter suddenly tried to turn himself into an invader.

In any event, Drake's remarkable circumnavigation of the world between 1577 and 1580 is his real monument. As

the beautifully executed maps in this exhibition show, it writes him into the annals of navigation in a manner that is proof against future wrangles as to his contribution to the victory over the Armada.

The self-educated son of a farm labourer, James Cook began his seafaring life in the unglamorous east-coast coal trade. By the time he enlisted in the Royal Navy, eight years later, he had learnt, at least, what makes a well-found ship. The *Endeavour*, in which he

made his round-the-world voyage between the years 1768 and 1771, may have been fired out at Deptford, but she had begun life as a Whitby collier. Cook knew that the breed had unmatched robustness, as well as the capacity to carry the stores needed for long passages in the untenanted southern oceans.

The record of his later voyages is enriched by the works of the painter William Hodges, who sailed with him. The *Endeavour*, in which he

and colour of South Sea Island life. One of the most memorable images of this section of the exhibition is *Tahiti Revisited* (1776), an evocation of a seemingly paradisaical existence in the last moments before it succumbed to the onslaught of a technical civilisation.

The John Franklin exhibit takes us from the heat and light of the South Pacific in April, 1845, to the icy wastes of the Arctic. When, in May 1845, the *Expedition* and *Terror* sailed out to look for the North-West Passage, with provisions for over three years and a library of

Clashes with the Spaniards were nothing to do with patriotism

2,900 books, they were reckoned to constitute the best-equipped expedition ever to leave England's shores. They never returned.

After ten years and the expenditure of almost a million pounds the Government gave up trying to find out what had happened. Lady Franklin persisted, and in 1850 an expedition financed by her finally found a note containing two messages. The first, dated May 28, 1847, announced "All well". The second, written almost a year later, recorded the death of Franklin and the abandonment of the two ships in the pack ice. It was to be the expedition's last testament to the outside world. In all, 129 men had perished.

● Blood, Sea and Ice: Three English Explorers at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (0181-438 4425) from Sunday until June 30

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Feb 1-24

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Expansion with a successful City bank has led to a demand for 4 WP Secretaries (with or without French) who are looking to make a positive step forward. Based within an award winning area you will provide assistance to Directors, with your software skills coming into full play for the company. Of growing size and with exciting future prospects, this is a fantastic opportunity for a motivated individual. Excellent salary and benefits package. Please call 0171-488 9922 Fax: 0171-782 3931

City Recruitment

YOU'VE SEEN THE REST - NOW CHOOSE THE BEST!

MARKETING SECRETARIES

Good PowerPoint Essential £17,000 + Excellent Benefits

This is a brilliant opportunity for two young team secretaries to join a friendly, busy and highly successful marketing department within an international finance company. These are brand new positions, so you won't be filling anyone else's shoes. Stacks of involvement, fabulous personalities and not huge hours.

CALLING ALL BANKING/FINANCE SECRETARIES
£17,000 - £20,000

Pan European has an extensive client base in the City and many prestigious companies are looking to recruit high calibre team and 1 to 1 or 2 secretaries. We are currently looking for audio and shorthand secretaries for the following areas: Corporate Finance, Specialised Finance, Compliance, Personnel, Operations, Publishing, IT

STOP PRESS! WE WILL BE OPEN UNTIL 11PM FOR LATE NIGHT REGISTRATIONS TONIGHT!

PAN EUROPEAN RECRUITMENT

Please call us on
0171-734 8484
Fax: 0171 734 8801

Get the appreciation you deserve!
£19,000 plus excellent benefits

Fast moving and rapidly expanding international company seeks a proactive, outgoing PA to work for one of its senior directors. This is a traditional PA role for someone who is a born organiser with the ability to survive in a hectic environment. If you have the professionalism to deal at the highest level coupled with the sort of personality which would enjoy a good night out, you will enjoy this role and feel appreciated. Skills 90/60/word for windows. Please call Caroline Galen to arrange an immediate interview 0171 487 6032.

HOBSTONES
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

LONG/SHORT TERM TEMPS!

If you have good secretarial skills (WAW / Amipro / Freelance) 50wpm, are looking for short or long term temp work, and the support of a helpful team, then call Darren Smyth at Tate Appointments on 0171 408 0424 NOW!

GROSVENOR DYNAMIC DUO

ENTREPRENEUR - £24,000 - Switched-on graduate needed to join small busy team in Holland Park working on tourism and leisure projects. 50+ wpm typing, W4W and 6+ mths work experience. Initiative and organisational skills essential.

USE YOUR FRENCH - £13,500 - 2 charming bosses in growing Co are looking for a strong communicator, with initiative and the ability to 'hold the fort'. French used in day-to-day correspondence (A level + required), 50wpm typing, W4W.

GROSVENOR BUREAU RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS
TEL: 0171 499 6566

MAINE-TUCKER
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

FROM RECEPTIONIST TO CONSULTANT!

£12-14,000 + BONUS + LIE IN & EARLY LEAVE + MED + MORE

It's 10.00am and you've just got to work (it's your first day). You suddenly remember there's a birthday today, so the changes in the fridge and you'll get the birthday cake later. You've also remembered to make notes for reception, because you're going to France for the day tomorrow, and you mustn't forget to book your train tickets for the weekend, because you leave work at 8.00pm on Friday. Start out here as a managing receptionist (days, nights, married) holding the marketing and troubleshooting for the team, and a year down the line, take on a junior exec role. If you're in your early 20s, well educated, smart and friendly with proven office experience and a desire to be a genuine team member, call us now. It's an immediate start!

18-21 Jermyn Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6HP
Telephone: 0171 734 7341 Facsimile: 0171 734 3260

MAINE-TUCKER
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

SMART BEGINNINGS
UP TO £15,500...

...leave a young first or second jobber (graduates welcome) who is bright enough and dynamic enough to take on a team secret role (50wpm). The office is one of the most exciting to be seen across London. If you are extremely well presented, well spoken and want a genuinely upmarket position, please call.

18-21 Jermyn Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6HP
Telephone: 0171 734 7341 Facsimile: 0171 734 3260

MAINE-TUCKER
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

SHOWROOM ADMINISTRATOR
£17,000

This innovative specialist organisation acts as a link between small enterprises producing handmade household items in Africa, Asia and Latin America and quality retailers and importers. The WI office (or rather, beautiful showroom) needs a capable and dedicated administrator to become involved in exhibition, marketing, publicity, fundraising and the expansion of the services offered to thirty countries. You'll need secretarial (50 wpm) and database experience, but your ability to understand the operation totally is paramount. You must also be a self-starter, sympathetic to the culture of developing countries and prepared to get on with a wide variety of people.

18-21 Jermyn Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6HP
Telephone: 0171 734 7341 Facsimile: 0171 734 3260

Secretary/ Admin

We are a small industry society with a friendly atmosphere. You will need excellent secretarial and word processing skills. Accurate typing in WordPerfect 6.0W essential and a good working knowledge of spreadsheets also required. Database experience a help. Self-Motivation an advantage. Salary package of £16/17,000 including BUPA. Please reply in writing with CV to:

SIGTTO, 17 St Helen's Place, London EC3A 8DE.

Team Secretary
£16,000

Bright and calm secretary needed for a busy City Insurance company. You will get involved with clients on a daily basis, handle extensive travel arrangements and your own projects. You'll be a well organised, talented secretary with 55wpm typing, audio, Word for Windows and some shorthand. Please call Sarah Dale on 0171 377 9919.

HOBSTONES
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

HR Assistant
Media £17,000 + +

Excellent opportunity to work alongside young HR Manager of company specialising in the provision of results of television advertising to agencies and advertisers direct. Part of a blue-chip multinational, on offer is sponsorship through IPD examinations as well as the chance to work in a fast-moving media environment. Position will encompass a variety of HR admin tasks as well as secretarial duties and one year's (preferably more) experience of secretarial/admin work is therefore essential. Minimum: A' level educated, WP/spreadsheet/database experience (in particular MS office), excellent verbal and written communication skills required, PRP, STL etc.

SUSAN DOUGHTY RECRUITMENT
39A CURZON ST, LONDON W1Y 7EP
TEL: 0171-491 7911 FAX: 0171-491 7932

PA/Secretary

to the Chairman of growing exhibition design & event management company is required. We are looking for an organised, bright person to manage his busy, international schedule. Excellent telephone manner, good typing and wordprocessing, sense of humour and flexibility are all essential. Great opportunity for second or third job. Some travel involved. French an advantage. Salary negotiable according to age and experience.

Please send your CV and a hand written letter to Caroline Sargent, Burton Ventures, 22 Percy Street, London W1P 9FF. No agencies.

Surrey PA
£20,000 neg

Our client has a newly appointed Chief Exec who needs a confident experienced PA to coordinate his extremely busy life. You will need to be a decision maker, free to travel occasionally & a good at putting people together. Good Benefits.

Call 0171 493 2888

HERITAGE RECRUITMENT

PA/ RESEARCHER
£18,000 plus Bonus

Well spoken, computer literate, experienced PA required to assist two directors in a busy corporate finance firm. Excellent organisational abilities are required along with a calm, discreet and happy disposition.

CV and covering letter to: Managing Director, Anglo European Announcements, 11 St James's Square, SW1Y 4LB or fax to 0171 930 2248.

PA/Sec - Staines
£17,000

Never a dull moment in this involving and varied role - PA/Sec to a busy local MP. Hold the fort in her absence, more round documents in a flash & enjoy being a pro active & valued member of the team. W4W / audio essential. 2 mins from BR.

Tel 0171 377 6777 Fax: 0171 377 5079

MIDDLETON JEFFERS
Recruitment Consultants

OTPs - LONDON EC4
£10,000ph + OT

City Bank req 8 OTPs for various roles: European Languages advantage. Exp on windows, excel, powerpoint, X train on systems. Familiar with graphics presentations. Call Brownlee Tel: 01438 747040 Fax CV 01438 747022. Interview to be held in London.

THE TIMES
Crème 96
12-14 JUNE 1996

Rise To The Challenge!
£23,000 package

Our client, a leading international company is seeking a proactive, responsible secretary to support one of its dynamic senior directors and provide back-up to the team. Using your excellent organisational and communication skills you will find yourself involved in arranging complex travel itineraries, dealing with administration and liaising closely with important clients. Stimulated in financial offices you will enjoy a young, lively working environment and a good social life. This is a busy, involved PA role which requires someone with energy, enthusiasm and total commitment. A financial sector background will be an advantage. Age 24 - 35, 50wpm typing/windows package. Please call Jane Shepherd on 0171 487 6032.

HOBSTONES
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

Personal Assistant
Pimlico to £20,000 aae

One-to-one PA role working with accomplished Search Consultant specialising in Executive level Public Sector recruitment. Largely autonomous with ample opportunity to utilise previous experience. Often working in isolation but enjoying extensive telephone liaison with potential candidates and Clients, giving progress and status reports as necessary. Responsibility for all office admin as well as meeting and greeting interviewees and administering psychometric tests. Plenty of variety and responsibility offered to mature PA ideally with ability to use both WordPerfect and Word for Windows. Shorthand useful. Excellent benefits including bonus.

SUSAN DOUGHTY RECRUITMENT
39A CURZON ST, LONDON W1Y 7EP
TEL: 0171-491 7911 FAX: 0171-491 7932

ADMINISTRATOR/PA
SALARY £19K

Aged 27+ non-smoker. Highly organised individual with excellent grammar. Must be self-motivated, computer literate and able to work on own initiative. Would suit candidate with office supervisory experience for small but busy SW3 interior design company.

Send CV to: Leigh Carr, 27 Blandford Street, London W1H 4EN. Ref: PG

LIQUID PAPER

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Simply write your name and job title in BLOCK CAPITALS on your company letterhead and fax it to: 01753 593491.

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TO ADVERTISE
CALL: 0171 481 9994

LA CRÈME DE LA CRÈME

FAX:
0171 481 9313

Flying Colours

SECRETARY/PA TO THE CHAIRMAN AND GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR

Working for a newly incorporated large tour operator from superb offices in Farnborough, Hampshire, you will be a confident and proactive secretary with excellent organizational, typing and word processing skills. You will be over 25 and have already worked for a number of years at top management level with good organizational skills and with an ability to work on your own initiative.

As you will work for two dynamic and high profile directors, an ability to prioritise your workload is essential.

SECRETARY TO THE GROUP OVERSEAS DIRECTOR

We also require a mature and competent Personal Assistant to work for the Overseas Director. The successful applicant will be over 25 and possess first class time management and communication skills as you will be expected to run the Overseas Director's office during his frequent trips overseas.

A conversational knowledge of Spanish would be an advantage, although not essential.

2 JOB SHARE RECEPTIONISTS

This shared vacancy will arise in early April and we require two part-time Receptionists to answer the telephone and cover full receptionist duties. This job will include general office duties such as stationary buying, post distribution and occasional material handling.

The successful applicants will be mature, well presented and well spoken. The hours are 9am - 5pm but will be shared between the two applicants.

So if you are highly motivated, have excellent organizational skills and wish to further your career, please send your Curriculum Vitae to:

GEORGE CRITZMAN
FLYING COLOURS RECRUITMENT GROUP
25-31 KILPATRICK ROAD
BROMLEY
KENT, BR1 1LT

TONBRIDGE

LEADING PA £18,000 + BENEFITS

FOR INTERNATIONAL FINANCE & PROPERTY CO.

PLEASE CONFIRM BY HANDWRITTEN LETTER & CV. S/H SPEED & MINIMUM OF (1) 70 WPM TYPING, (2) FRL, (3) FOR PROP. &/OR SMALL CO. BACKGROUND, (4) GOOD A/C & COMPUTER SKILLS (4) N/S.

TO FAX NO: 01732 743123.

SECRETARY/RECEPTIONIST

Thriving West Kensington Estate Agency, enthusiastic outgoing personality with skills in WP, WAW and administration. Competitive rates of pay. Reply to Patrick Glynn Jones, Mary West Kensington, 84 North End Road, London W14 9ES. Tel: 0171 602 8511

WI AD AGENCY

MD of small, creative and agency needs a bright, enthusiastic, well spoken secretary with good WP skills. Other essential qualities include organisational ability and a sense of humour. Terrific opportunity for college leaver. Salary £12,000. Call on 0171 439 1175

BUYER'S ASSISTANT

Exclusive wedding list company needs a bright, accurate and energetic assistant. Duties include with suppliers, placing orders, track and pricing. Good future prospects. Write and CV to: WLC Unit 3, Sullivan Enterprise Centre, Sullivan Road, London SW6 3DI

A Classic PA..

Salary £25,000 + Benefits

Age: 28-40 yrs

...will have the confidence, flexibility and high standards to rise to the challenge of this true PA role. Working for the Head of an expanding financial company your duties will be a real mixture of business and personal work. Your day may consist of taking minutes, extensive travel arrangements or liaising with his family. Skills: 80/60wpm, Word for Windows, Excel. If you are self motivated, able to anticipate problems and have a solid financial CV please call Gill Towner on 0171-390 7000.

Crone Corkill

Recruitment Consultants

WA

20-22,000 + bonus + bens

PROACTIVE PA

Would you like a boss who is dynamic, young, hard-working and fun? The MD of a small, friendly finance company is desperately looking for a highly efficient, proactive and bright secretary to support mainly him but also two others, not only organising his hectic daily life but also having a full front line role and getting involved. S/h and good WP skills a must.

0171 225 1888
VICTORIA WALL ASSOCIATES

PA/SECRETARIES

£16500

Five Weeks Holidays!

Our Client, a leading name in the international service sector, have interesting and demanding vacancies for first class secretaries in Marketing and Operations. You will possess excellent communication and presentation skills. You will also be a superb organiser with the ability to co-ordinate various tasks efficiently and effectively, whilst maintaining a sense of style. Short-hand is useful. Knowledge of Windows package including graphics is essential.

For more information about these positions call Caroline Drew 0171 589 1866

THE ST. JAMES'S CONSULTANCY

PA./Senior Secretary

Senior Partner of a small but busy firm of Surveyors requires a P.A./administrator. As well as good W.P. skills (and preferably shorthand) you will be a good organiser/administrator and possibly have some knowledge of personnel. You will have a confident attitude together with excellent communication and client liaison skills.

Good salary and package for the right applicant. Please send full C.V. and covering letter together with salary level to:

Mr. R.D.C. Hunter, Hunters, 45 Ludgate Hill, London EC4R 7JU
(No agencies)

International Marketing

£30,000

A young charismatic MD of an international marketing company is looking for an exceptional senior level PA/Secretary to match his energy levels and dynamism.

With so many competing priorities, he relies totally on his PA to manage his time to maximum effect, to represent his views at all levels and to forge good relationships with other offices in Europe and the States. You must already be well versed in the requirements of running an MD's office, be an intelligent assistant, quick on the uptake, strong on both charm and ruthless efficiency who enjoys working in a partnership with a senior executive. Skills 100/60. Please call on:

0171-814 0800
Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer. All applicants are positively informed.

Angela Mortimer

SEC/ADMIN

Maternity Post (10 months)

Small property company in West Kensington requires accurate typist with good, confident telephone manner. General office duties. 10 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Friday. Salary: £12,000 (negotiable) Non-smoker.

Telephone 0171-603 7495.

MISON RECRUITMENT

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Shorthand Secretary c£27K Pkg

This newly created, demanding yet rewarding role, supporting a Global Director who is exceptionally busy, requires first class shorthand and typing skills 100/70, excellent education and the initiative to take you on in a very busy area. The core hours are 9.30 to 5.30, overtime paid and ideally you should be aged 25-35. If you are confident, self-motivated and realistic and would enjoy working for one of the world's leading international City based Banks who offer a benefits package second to none, telephone today for an immediate appointment.

WE ARE OPEN UNTIL 5.00 PM THIS EVENING
New 0171 589 1784 Fax 0171 589 3133

Corporate Finance

£30,000+ West End

Stylish, thriving financial institution has several vacancies for outstanding secretaries to support dynamic and demanding teams in fast moving client driven areas. These jobs call for those who have real energy, enthusiasm and drive. You will be expected to use your judgement to prioritise effectively and be confident working on your own initiative in demanding deadlines. Your full range of secretarial skills plus your ability to co-ordinate and organise will be essential to the role. Being a perfectionist you will be keen to produce work of only the highest quality to be recognised as a key team member. Corporate Finance experience is essential as are good audio/copy typing, shorthand and WP experience. A' levels strongly preferred. Age 23 - 30. Please call Karen Linton on 0171-390 7000.

Crone Corkill

Recruitment Consultants

WA

£17-19,000 + O/T + bens

USE YOUR ASSETS!

Excellent opportunity to create your own role as you support two people within the marketing department of a high profile investment bank. They would love a secretary with initiative and drive who enjoys being delegated to and is a true team player to set up systems, take on added responsibilities and always remain one step ahead. Good sec skills (incl. Powerpoint pref), languages useful.

0171 225 1888
VICTORIA WALL ASSOCIATES

career moves

TELEVISION SECRETARY TO MANAGING DIRECTOR

£18,000

If you can work at a frantic pace, keep calm, be incredibly organised whilst at the same time being flexible and using your professional secretarial skills (inc S/H at 80-100wpm) to the full, then you could find a fulfilling role in this demanding office as part of a high profile team. Working alongside the MD's Executive Assistant you will have an idea of who's who, have worked at Director level, enjoy "team work" and take pride in your presentation.

124 Great Portland Street, London W1M 6PF.
Tel: 0171 636 8411. Fax: 0171 636 2487.

TOP SECRETARY/PA

circa £28,000

Is there anybody out there who is London based, a non-smoker and who wants to work as a member of a small, happy team in the Holborn Circus area? I need somebody who is good named with total integrity, completely trustworthy and educated to 'A' level standard. Must also be numerate. Window literate and have Pitman S/H 100 wpm. Age 26-38.

Please phone me on:
0171 404 3111
NO AGENCIES

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

£17,500

Interesting role for Secretary with Parliamentary expertise to assist H.O Dept with Research, budgets, projects and high profile interaction. 50 wpm typing / audio (shorthand ideal). Excellent benefits in Corporate office.

Ring Sandra Day on 0171 235 7114

SANDRA DAY PERSONNEL

Research Secretary / Assistant

£19,000 + Bank Bens

A fabulous opportunity to really get involved in the day to day running of a small high profile team of Investment Analysts. Strong secretarial skills are a must. Excellent chance to become truly involved and use your brain! The job will involve Research, admin, organising, (languages useful) Word, Excel, PowerPoint used.

Call Sarah Turnbull on 0171 588 8999
Aldrich & Co Ltd
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

WORKING

Executive PA in Films

c£20,000

Yes, the reality is a non-factor role working in the magical world of Film Production and Distribution. The Company is part of one of the World's great Communications organisations which owns some of the great names in the film business. You'll be working for a top notch American Executive who runs their European film distribution network. The business is run at a fast-out pace but with total calm and poise. You'll have to be a totally committed individual who is used to working to tight deadlines, to a demanding boss. We're looking for an excellent Secretary with a minimum 24 years experience of similar level, plus advanced Word, and Excel. A 24hr turnaround in film here you don't need film experience, age 24-35.

Call Neil Smith on 0171-540 0545 or text him on 0171-540 1588.
Curriculum vitae come please.
Working for LSI, Professional Recruitment
17 Tavistock St, Covent Garden, London WC2E 7PA.

£20,000 + benefits

Top PA to PR Chief Exec

Are you a confident, energetic personality? This is a fun, high profile position supporting a dynamic body who is in the middle of restructuring and building a big name in the consultancy business. In exciting and exciting times your first class initiative and ability to juggle an ever-changing diary will be vital. Secretarial content is minimal, client contact is high and thinking ahead is imperative. Shorthand or speed writing necessary.

£14,500

PR Team Assistant/Secretary

Are you a fun-loving team player with an interest in PR? This is a great job for a lively personality who loves talking to clients, organising a small team and keeping a finger on the pulse of business activities 50wpm typing, excellent Word for Windows and total merge needed along with a proactive approach to involvement.

One year's secretarial experience.

Contact Amanda Johnson
38, South Molton Street,
London, W1Y 1HA
Tel: 0171 495 8668
or Fax 0171 495 8344

PA Directors

£22,000 + Benefits

West End

An international company with a regional office in London seeks a dynamic PA who is looking for a position which will offer them plenty of scope. The ideal candidate should have the following skills:

- * excellent organisation and communication skills
- * Word for Windows, Excel and PowerPoint
- * shorthand 80 wpm with good written English
- * familiarity with information systems advantageous

If you fulfil the above criteria please call Julie Galsworthy-Waring on 0171-494 4512 to discuss the opportunities this company has to offer.

Crone Corkill

Recruitment Consultants

TEAM SEC/COORDINATOR

As PA (25+) to the sales team of this young, expanding fashion co., you will be involved in everything from buying to house across the board. c£18,000 max.

JOYCE GUNDS
0171 589 8807
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

PA to MD

You too can be a supportive person in this fast-moving private company. Looking after the MD, the estate, the patients & the President. Coordinator all your skills will blend. c£15,000.00

JOYCE GUNDS
0171 589 8807
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

FUTURES RECRUITMENT

PA to MD

An experienced and competent graduate PA with a high level of initiative is sought to assist the MD of this Guildford based company in all areas of work, ensuring smooth and efficient running of the offices and his life. A good communicator with a strong character and used to making high level contacts, you will have formal secretarial training (to RSA III) and a knowledge of AppleMac and MS-DOS/Windows PCs.

16-19 Chapel Street, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 3LU
Tel: (01483) 302201 Fax: (01483) 34777

TOP SECRETARY/PA

circa £28,000

Is there anybody out there who is London based, a non-smoker and who wants to work as a member of a small, happy team in the Holborn Circus area? I need somebody who is good named with total integrity, completely trustworthy and educated to 'A' level standard. Must also be numerate. Window literate and have Pitman S/H 100 wpm. Age 26-38.

Please phone me on:
0171 404 3111
NO AGENCIES

COX & KINGS TRAVEL

Specialist tour operator to the Indian Subcontinent, Latin America & The Middle East requires:

MARKETING ASSISTANT
£12,000 pa

Assisting in advertising, promotions, agency sales, public relations. Must be able to start by end Feb.

ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT
£10,000 pa

Assisting in sales and operations. Must be able to start immediately.

Applicants for both positions must be computer literate with good writing skills, fast and accurate typing skills and an excellent telephone manner. Previous experience not essential.

Applications in writing only, with CV to Jenny Hand, Cox & Kings, 4th Floor, Gordon House, 10 Grosvenor Place, London SW1P 1PH.

Broker's PA

£20,000 + Bank Bens

A new position within a well respected, young firm of city based brokers. Well educated secretary needed - lots of scope for advancement. High levels of client contact. Total involvement! Must be totally discreet, confident and charming with loads of initiative. Must have a highly organised mind. Word on Mac, Excel.

Call Sarah Turnbull on 0171 588 8999
Aldrich & Co Ltd
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Renowned, modern Italian restaurant in West London needs a capable person with substantial experience of the following skills:

- * Computer accounting
- * Spreadsheets
- * Word processing
- * Office administration/PA duties

Minimum ten years' experience essential, preferably within the restaurant trade.

Salary negotiable aae.

Please telephone 0171 831 3609 (Monday to Thursday between 10.00am and 4.00pm) or write with CV to: Lani Herdman, Lee Associates, 6 Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5DG.

AMERICAN CO-DYNAMIC ENV

PA/SECRETARY

An international PA role in a dynamic, fast-paced environment. The successful candidate will be responsible for a wide range of administrative duties, including travel arrangements, correspondence, and general office management. The role requires a high level of organisation, attention to detail, and the ability to work under pressure.

PROPERTY INVESTMENT & DEVELOPMENT
£18-25K + BENEFITS
PENSION/SHIPPA
Proactive professional with a proven track record in property investment and development. The role involves managing a portfolio of properties, overseeing development projects, and liaising with clients and stakeholders.

SYNDICATE STYLE
PA/SECRETARY
A dynamic and challenging role within a syndicate style environment. The successful candidate will be responsible for managing a team of professionals, overseeing business operations, and ensuring the highest standards of service and performance.

TEL: 0171 235 9949
DRAKE INTERNATIONAL

PERSONNEL APPEAL?

Age: 21-28

to £19000 + banking pkg

Frederick US Investment Bank, based in Canary Wharf, currently have two highly administrative secretarial vacancies in their Personnel department. Both roles are very involving and require resilience, flexibility (to work long hours), and a proactive approach. Typing will be minimal but organising must be your forte as just a few of your duties will include circulating CV's, setting up interviews, liaising with staff, compiling reports, and dealing with expenses.

Experience: Open. Skills: 60wpm and Windows. Please call Claire Ashley on 0171-390 7000 for further information.

Crone Corkill

Recruitment Consultants

PA in PR?

If you're outgoing your first job is what you want to use your experience & skills to look after a busy Director of the team, you will blossom in this leading consultancy. Pro-active environment & lots of scope. c£15,000.00

JOYCE GUNDS
0171 589 8807
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

FIRST JOBBER

c£12,000.00

We have three exciting openings for first jobbers in charity, marketing & party organisation. So if you have basic WP skills & 'A' Levels call us now.

JOYCE GUNDS
0171 589 8807
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

career moves

OPENINGS IN PR AND MARKETING

£12,000-15,000

If you have always wanted to work within the Public Relations or Marketing field but have been caught in the trap of not having the right experience - this could be your opportunity to make your mark in a top international consultancy. They currently have several vacancies due to expansion and promotion for bright group secretaries with GCSE/A level education (graduates must enjoy secretarial work), 50wpm typ and a min of 6 months work experience. You will learn about all aspects of PR, deal with clients, set up events etc. Good communication skills and presentation essential.

124 Great Portland Street, London W1M 6PF.
Tel: 0171 636 8411, Fax: 0171 636 2487.

COX & KINGS TRAVEL

Specialist tour operator to the Indian Subcontinent, Latin America & The Middle East requires:

MARKETING ASSISTANT
£12,000 pa

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ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT
£10,000 pa

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Applicants for both positions must be computer literate with good writing skills, fast and accurate typing skills and an excellent telephone manner. Previous experience not essential.

Applications in writing only, with CV to Jenny Hand, Cox & Kings, 4th Floor, Gordon House, 10 Grosvenor Place, London SW1P 1PH.

CAREER IN RECRUITMENT THE OPPORTUNITY FOR 1996....

Due to phenomenal growth we are looking for experienced and enthusiastic individuals to join our friendly and professional company.

We offer a training and career development programme that is second to none. To qualify you should be well educated (min A' levels), hard working, flexible, charming, and a genuine team player with excellent communication skills and personal presentation.

To succeed and enjoy this challenging and dynamic environment we look for individuals who are innovative and self-motivated, with the potential for rapid personal development to satisfy their ambitions.

Please apply in writing enclosing your CV quoting ref BL96 to: Baines & Baines, Knightsbridge Secretaries, Granville House, 152-158 Sloane Street, London SW1 9AN (or by Fax: 0171 235 5060) by 3 February 1996.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE SECRETARIES E

PERSONNEL DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR

LONDON W1

c£21K plus excellent bens

To provide a database system for HR teams of a major plc. The successful candidate will be responsible for maintaining and updating the database, ensuring data accuracy and security, and providing support to HR staff.

Please fax your CV to: Janette Teager & Associates, Human Resource Management Consultants, 152-158 Sloane Street, London SW1 9AN. Tel: 0171 235 5060.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

WEST OF LONDON

c£27-28K + Benefits

our client, a major international plc, seeks an Exec Assistant for one of its Executive Directors.

Essential criteria: excellent communication, organisational skills and personal presentation. Min A' Levels education. PC literate WAW, Excel, PowerPoint.

Please fax your CV in the first instance to: Jan Teager, Tel: 0171 847 5288 Fax: 0171 847 5514

JANETTE TEAGER & ASSOCIATES
Human Resource Management Consultants

LETTINGS NEGOTIATOR

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Please send a CV, together with covering letter to: Ann Coyne, Human Resources Department, British Medical Association, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JP.

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Please apply in writing, enclosing a full CV, to:

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Administrative Attaché
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 25 Park Walk, London SW19 7TJ

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Scream

Stone investigation puts boxing on the ropes

The law takes a firm, paternal stance on potentially lethal activities such as smoking, driving and drinking. All three can not only kill you; they can injure you, they can impair the quality of the rest of your life. Therefore, for all these, the law sets a minimum age of 16, 17, 18.

This is not the case in boxing. New research shows that boxing, like smoking, can have debilitating effects from the day you take it up. These facts must be looked at with the utmost seriousness. The facts come from the examination at the Royal London Hospital of the brain of a 23-year-old boxer who died of violent injuries caused in the ring. Although the hospital could not name the boxer because of patient confidentiality, the fact is that Bradley Stone, 23, died in the Royal London in April 1994.

The point here is that there are two types of injury that can be caused by boxing. The first is the acute concussive injury during a fight that leads to bleeding in the head. That is what causes the dramatic rushes to hospital, the headline-making deaths.

The second type of injury is subtle and cumulative, a slow accumulation of damage, cell by cell, that may take years to produce any obvious effect. It makes itself clear as a progressive failure of memory very similar to Alzheimer's disease. For which, of course, there is no treatment.

The truly disturbing fact is that Stone suffered from both. He died from a massive brain haemorrhage, two days after his last fight. But a team of neuropathologists at the Royal London, led by Dr Jennian Geddes, discovered that Stone's brain also contained structural abnormalities of the kind found in those who suffer from Alzheimer's — and also in old boxers.

The punch-drunk syndrome, or dementia pugilistica, is suffered by old boxers and is a long-established neurological fact. The breakthrough here was the detailed investigation of the brain, looking beyond the immediate and dramatic cause of death.

"We found signs of long-standing brain damage, and because there was no evidence of any other disease when he was alive, we have to

MIDWEEK VIEW



SIMON BARNES

assume it was caused by repeated blows to the head," Geddes told the *New Scientist* magazine.

Stone had been boxing from the age of 11. He had fought as a professional for four years. There was nothing, but a little absent-mindedness, to suggest that he suffered from any damage to the brain. But the damage was there all along, subtle and cumulative.

A statement from the Royal

London Hospital said: "The changes seen in brain cells in dementia pugilistica are called 'neurofibrillary tangles'. Their presence is always abnormal and indicates that there has been damage to nerve cells. They are not found in young adults (and were not present in 21 brains of non-boxers which were also studied as controls). As neurofibrillary tangles can only be seen under a microscope, they would not have been detectable by the brain scans that are routinely used to monitor boxers."

In other words, you have to be dead before they can be discovered. The British Boxing Board of Control has long claimed that punch-drunk syndrome is a thing of the past: better controls and shorter fights see to that. The Stone case puts that argument right out of court.

The *New Scientist* said in an editorial: "The pro-boxing world cannot remain sceptical. They have persistently asked for scientific evidence to prove that boxing causes brain damage even when the sport is played under tight controls. They have it."

So far, I have stuck to facts and the opinions of others. My own abolitionist stance on boxing has been echoing down these columns for some years, after all. I do not want these latest and terrifying facts to be written off here as another bit of opinion-mongering.

My own belief, that boxing should be banned, is normally countered by the consenting adults argument. This is a good argument, but it is condemned to the shredder by the Stone case. Stone may have been a consenting adult when he died, but he was a child when he set out on the road that led to the subtle and cumulative injuries he also received. It is the job of the law to protect children from activities that will ruin their adult lives.

I would like to congratulate the researchers at the Royal London for a piece of important work, for that eternally important scientific matter of looking beyond the obvious. Their research clearly has stunning implications for boxing. Every argument boxing puts up for its continuation now lies in tatters.

Age-old rock is updated

Hearts and Hands and Voices. Radio 2, 9.00pm.

The fourth of Barbara Dickson's programmes about hymns through the ages is a veritable ear and heart-opener. She brings religious songs right up to date. I cannot imagine anybody coming up with a more effective way of measuring the vast distance the hymn has travelled since Herbert Howells's death in 1933, never mind the changes made since the great explosion of hymnology in the Victorian era. As Dickson says: "It is possible to write great new hymns in our time." In the 20th century, many hymns and even the rhythms are recognisably those of the quixotic, and even the beguine, and the evangelical movement has produced some vocal riches. And yet *Rock of Ages* refuses to crumble in our affections.

Concerto. Classic FM, 2.00pm.

"Hold on a minute," you might find yourself saying after listening to the first few minutes of this recording "surely that's Chopin! But they said it was someone called Field." The reason they said it was Field is because it is. Dublin-born John Field was Chopin's contemporary. It is generally agreed that he invented the nocturne, which Chopin went on to perfect and popularise. As composer and performer, Chopin's name was often coupled with Field's. I hope all this has given you an appetite to hear John O'Connor playing not Chopin's but Field's Piano Concerto No 1 with the New Irish Chamber Orchestra, this afternoon.

Peter Daville

Britain seek high-tech aid to qualify

Whitaker projects modern image of Olympic pursuit

FROM ANDREW LONGMORE IN BARCELONA

ANYONE still regarding hockey as one of the last bastions of gung-ho amateurism has clearly not inspected the nerve-centre of the Great Britain team at present involved in an intense struggle for Olympic qualification here. Room 407 of the team hotel looks more like the bowels of a BBC outside-broadcasting unit than a bedroom as two coaches dissect the team's latest performance on a double-monitor editing suite and the head coach, David Whitaker, surveys an 8ft high projection screen pinned to the wall.

Nothing is left to chance in hockey's new high-tech age. The gadgetry includes a video camera with on-sight replay facility (£5,000), £2,000 worth of portable projector, a tripod (£500) and batteries which set the cash-strapped Hockey Association (HA) back £250 a match. The editing box cost another £3,000. The team even has its own video operator. During games, Whitaker will be fed information on short-circuit routines and tactical nuances by radio, much like an American football coach, while the players talk in unchappily lingo about "running patterns of play".

How much difference this appliance of science makes, not even Whitaker would care to quantify. The gap between the leading eight teams in the world is so minute, no one can afford to miss a trick. And if that means the treasurer of the HA poking his nose around the door to see where all his money has gone, so be it. The international game is as much a battle of wits off the field as on it. Information is power and players like to know they have the technology on their side, too. Before the 4-1 victory over Belarusia the coaching team analysed every routine their opponents had used in this and the last tournament.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	3	2	1	0	7	1	5
Holland	3	2	0	1	10	6	4
Great Britain	3	1	2	0	8	5	4
India	3	1	2	0	7	4	4
Malaysia	3	2	0	1	8	5	4
Canada	3	1	1	1	5	8	3
Belgium	3	0	0	3	3	9	0
Belarusia	3	0	0	3	2	9	0

Top five qualify for Olympics

TODAY'S MATCHES: Canada v Malaysia; India v Belarusia; Spain v Britain; Belgium v Holland

Whitaker is too shrewd to be hooked by the wizardry. He was, after all, coach to the 1988 Olympic champions, whose debt to electronics extended no further than a VHS tape and the nearest television screen, and who won gold through such unprogrammable virtues as resilience and flair. Nor does he have to search far for a morality tale to highlight the dangers of stifling free thought.

One of his assistant coaches,

Julian Halls, who missed Britain's first three matches with a back injury, will not play against Spain today and is doubtful for the remaining games. "He is fairly mobile when running but, when it comes to hitting the ball, there are problems," David Whitaker, the manager, said.

James Duthie, still remembered as a short corner in the semi-final of the 1984 Games in Los Angeles. He followed instructions by hitting the ball high. The keeper palmed it away. Britain lost 1-0 and Duthie still wonders what might have been if he had followed his instinct to shoot low.

The video also isolates players who are willing to accept their mistakes and learn from them. Some can be suspicious of having their inadequacies

magnified and plastered over a hotel wall. "You look at mistakes not to beat up on players," Whitaker said. "But to make them go forward. It's a matter of building up their trust. Some are receptive to the feedback, some are still stuck in a fear of 'does that mean I won't play again?'"

It is a fine balance between promoting fear and eradicating stupidity. While consciously resisting the temptation to hark back to past glories, Whitaker knows that this team has yet to develop the independence of spirit so vital to the success of his 1988 side. One of his favourite sayings is: "Those who look to the bench should be on the bench."

Richard Dadds, captain of the 1988 team, now chairman of the Great Britain men's Olympic Hockey Committee, has noticed it, too. It was all he could do to stop himself from rushing onto the pitch when Belarusia scored on Monday.

"That's when experience counts, someone to say: 'Look, we're still 3-1 up.' The goal might be somebody's fault but it doesn't matter. Let's get on with it."

Whether that sort of ring-craft can be taught by video may only be discovered in Atlanta in July when the team will be more battle-hardened anyway after a ferocious schedule of preparation matches. "The players seem to want more to do to them. It's not just in hockey, it's life in general," Dadds said. "But the one thing that makes characters is individuality. The guys I call great players were those who would put their necks on the line and do something out of the ordinary."

It is reassuring, then, to know that some old-fashioned coaching methods remain. At one point in their last match, Whitaker was so cross with his team he roared all advice from his video men. "I thought: 'So, it's you've got yourselves into this mess, you get yourselves out of it and I let the team get on with it.' That will be music to the ears of the treasurer, anyway."



Askew, left, and Humphreys secure eleventh position in the compulsory dance in Sofia

Cousins's status under threat

FROM JOHN HENNESSY IN SOFIA

STEVEN COUSINS, the holder of the British figure skating title seven times, opens his challenge here today in the European championships. Cousins, 23, a Welshman, will be backed up by an even younger skater from Northern Ireland, Neil Wilson, 17, in the short programme.

At stake will be not only a laudable finishing position — the possibility of a medal is out of the question — but a share of the prize-money on offer for the first time in these championships, now that the word amateur has been expunged from the skating vocabulary. The winner will receive about £20,000, but even the last of the 24 who qualify for tomorrow's final will receive a modest reward

of around £1,300.

Cousins finished eighth last year, thereby allowing Britain a second entry this time and contriving the baptism of Wilson at this level. The results this season suggest that competition is so fierce that Cousins will do well to hold his position. Much will depend on whether or not he can pull off the spectacular combination jump of triple axel to triple toe-loop as some others are expected to do.

Wilson, a superb stylist in the manner of John Curry, cannot yet compete gymnastically with the leaders and his combination of triple flip to double toe-loop, plus the absence of a triple lutz, will place him at a severe disadvantage in this particular exercise. He needs not 2½ minutes stud-

ded with the required elements but the 4½ minutes of the free programme to develop and display his artistry.

Marika Humphreys and Philip Askew, brought together only six months ago by Betty Callaway, did well yesterday to finish eleventh in both compulsory dances at the first attempt. Humphreys, moreover, was shaken by a collision during the warm-up for the second compulsory, a silver samba, which produced a small but deep cut in her right ankle. She stoically disguised any sign of discomfort during the dance.

Both dances were won by the world champions, Oksana Grischuk and Evgeny Platov, of Russia.

Results, page 45

Smith seeks to come top of the class

LAWRIE SMITH, Britain's most successful yachtsman, faces one of the stiffest challenges of his career this week as he fights for Olympic qualification in the Star class against his old rival, Glyn Charles. The Coral Reef Yacht Club here in Miami is the setting for what may turn into a grudge match.

Smith, bronze medal-winner in the 1992 Olympics in the Soling class, has beaten Charles in Olympic trials twice before. Charles, a former top Laser sailor and skipper of the Mumm 36 in Britain's Admiral's Cup campaign last summer, will be under pressure from the outset.

"One of the reasons Glyn went into the Stars this time was because he thought he had a good shot," an observer said yesterday. "Then Lawrie decided to come, which has upset the applecart a bit. Glyn and Lawrie have had a battle for qualification for the past three Games. There is needle between them."

The Star is the last class in the British Olympic squad to complete qualification. It will be decided over 14 races, eight



Edward Gorman previews this week's competition for the final Olympic sailing squad places

of which will be sailed this week in a fleet of 25, with the remaining six, in a much larger fleet, at the Biscardi Cup here in March.

While trials in all the other classes were completed in Weymouth last August, the Royal Yachting Association decided to delay the Stars to enable more teams to prepare. In addition to Smith, sailing with Chris Mason, and Charles, with George Skudodas, the five boats in the trials here include David Howlett, with Phil Lawrence.

Howlett has years of experience in the class and went to the Olympics in Barcelona in a Star, where he was lying third after three races, before fading in the second half of the regatta.

The Star, 23ft long with a huge mast carrying a large mainsail but a tiny non-overlapping jib, is a notoriously difficult boat to sail well. It

goes beautifully in very light winds but becomes overpowered in anything stronger. The key is to master the complexities of a sophisticated and highly adjustable rig to generate straight-line speed.

Although never a popular boat in Britain, there is excellent past form in the class.



Smith: proven ability

Mike McKintyre and Bryn Valle won a gold medal at the 1993 Olympics in South Korea.

Smith has had only a short apprenticeship in the class. It began at Spa, in Holland, in May last year, where he won two races. He followed that with ninth place at the European championships and then an indifferent world championships. His proven ability at tacking a technical rig to squeeze extra speed makes him favourite to qualify.

One pointer to the outcome of this latest contest came last week, when both Smith and Charles raced at the St Petersburg Sport Regatta, also in Florida. Smith finished third, one place ahead of his rival.

Most of the rest of the British team were there, including Ben Ainslie, 18, who won the Laser fleet contest by more than 50 points. Among those trailing in his wake was Robert Scheidt, of Brazil, the world champion.

Jim Saltonstall, the Olympic team coach, was delighted. "It was a very good confidence-building result," he said. "Ben has now proven to himself he can beat these guys."

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 45

TIN FISH

(a) A fairly obvious jocular metaphor for the unfunny torpedo, slang from WWI when the tin fish was introduced. Cl. tin hat for the soldier's helmet, as Germans were called Jerry because their tin hats looked like the bedroom utensil that was more common when lavatories were rare and/or at the bottom of the garden. In naval jargon, the older expression tin man describes someone trying to dominate any discussion without having the necessary knowledge and therefore in danger of being knocked down like the tin men targets on a rifle range.

(c) The decisive battle of the Hundred Years War, 17 July, 1453. The English longbow was finally overthrown by French artillery. Instead of their usual defensive formation against the French cavalry, the English were forced into an injudicious attack. Near the place now called Castillon la Bataille there is a memorial plaque to John Talbot, the English commander, who fought and died at the age of 75 without wearing his "harness", as he had foolishly sworn not to do, and was in consequence a soft target.

FYRD

(b) The call-up for military service of all the Anglo-Saxon farmers who were required to follow their king into such battles as Stamford Bridge (not Chelsea) and Hastings (Senlac). Trevelyan, *History of England*: "The King's personal following of thegn was not large. The fyrd could only be called out for a few weeks, and the Saxon farmers had no desire to colonise other Saxon kingdoms."

CADRE

(a) A skeleton corps that consists of key personnel, mostly officers, sergeants and technicians, a military nucleus capable of rapid expansion. French from the Russian for a cell of trained communist leaders. The word is shifting to mean a key individual, apparatchik or supporter.

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1... Bb4+ and when the king moves, Black continues 2... Rxc3, winning a piece due to the threat against the white rook on b3

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Scream in danger of turning into a giggle

The story was not particularly grisly, but there was a chilling moment in last night's *The Scream*, reminiscent of the thriller at its best. On the trail of the *Scream*, stolen from Norway's National Gallery, two men drove to a secret destination and found by the side of the road, in the grass, a fragment of *The Scream*'s original frame. They picked it up. Their hearts welled with horror. It was like receiving a finger in the post — only instead of a severed digit, it was a piece of wood like a plank. *The Scream* was in danger of being a thriller at its best.

Keith Alexander's *The Scream* was a thriller at its best. On the trail of the *Scream*, stolen from Norway's National Gallery, two men drove to a secret destination and found by the side of the road, in the grass, a fragment of *The Scream*'s original frame. They picked it up. Their hearts welled with horror. It was like receiving a finger in the post — only instead of a severed digit, it was a piece of wood like a plank. *The Scream* was in danger of being a thriller at its best.

harm done" stamped clearly on their foreheads. Everyone watching the film knew that the painting was now back on the wall, yelling "Aaargh! I feel so wobbly!" and that the guilty men had been convicted. But this was no reason to make the crime and the investigation look somehow unimportant. True, it's only a painting, not a human life. But it was really stolen, and it is really worth several million quid.

I suspect a Norway Factor here (no ho, nothing horrible happens in Norway). I also suspect a Hitler Diaries Factor — a desire to make the story appear ludicrous and farcical — when actually only little bits of it co-operate with that analysis. What will make last night's story famous, however, was a genuinely funny moment told by a jolly cove from Scotland, Yard, whose role (as recreated) was to stay in a hotel room, eat plentifully from room service, and

worry about what was going on. But he also had this awful moment: having chosen an Oslo hotel for his cleverly prepared set-up, he discovered just before the crucial meeting that the place was over-run with international police wearing tags and bulletproof vests. A police convention was being held in the same hotel. His whole life flashed before his eyes. But in retrospect, perhaps it was not bad thing. Think how this coincidence must have impressed the opposition, if they were at all suspicious. Nobody would plan this, they must have thought.

And talking of bad planning, the second instalment of *The House* (BBC2) lived up to the promise of its trailers, with a beleaguered Jeremy Isaacs trying to outface his board for a "catastrophic" and "appalling" incompetent. Somehow a terrible de-

REVIEW



Lynne Truss

cision had been made — to commission the designer Maria Bjornson for two huge, elaborate productions at once. The resulting logjam caused a big budget overspend, and people were looking pale and strained. Nobody put the blame on the designer, which was nice of them (and probably fair). The only time anyone had a sharp word for her was when two horses were introduced to her finally-

completed set of *Kaya Kabanova*. "The horses are white! Should they be white!" she exclaimed to a weary Trevor Nunn. He put his hands behind his head and leant back. "I don't care," he replied.

Rather in the way the unfortunate Oslo police convention made Scotland Yard's operation look genuine, this cock-up at the Opera House certainly proves one thing: that nothing was contrived to impress the cameras. Yes, yes, nobody would plan this. But as always, the backstage horrors were not reflected on the stage — *Kaya* looked and sounded wonderful. Bjornson's set was a great Expressionistic whirl of paint — rather like *The Scream* — and the Russian star stood in its vortex singing the Czech for "Aaargh! I feel so wobbly" to great effect.

The Sleeping Beauty for the Royal Ballet was another triumph of design, but unfortunately another oversight came to light

when the polished floor made the prima ballerina slip and fall over. The producer, Anthony Dowell, watched the dress rehearsal from the stalls, grimacing and holding his head. What cracking good telly this is. I could watch it every night.

On children's television, *Grange Hill* (BBC1) returned for its 19th series, replacing the enjoyable six-part *Demon Headmaster*. A boy called Kevin was taunted by toughs for wearing a namby-pamby anorak; and a boy called Chris turned out to be remarkably good at badminton. Well, this was enough for me: I was hooked. Watching children's television is always excusable, I think, if one can say, "Just looking out for the stars of tomorrow" — which feels nobody but preserves some dignity. *The Demon Headmaster* featured some very good pint-sized actors (Frances Anley as the girl lead was lovely) and also a

frightening prefect called Rose (Katy Crawford, Kasting) whose proud face and crystal-clear accent mark her as a potential Estella. If *Great Expectations* is made again soon.

Finally, *The Chauffeur's Tale*, a mysterious ten-minute programme about Barbara Cartland's former chauffeur, turned up before *Nightnight* on BBC2 — a colourful, sunny little film, set mainly in the interior of a travelling Rolls-Royce while Perry Como crooned *Magic Moments*. A fake Barbara Cartland sometimes took the passenger seat — face unseen, but identifiable by hair, cerise chiffon and lapdog — and the driver told anecdotes about his former employer, rather uncomfortably. Still, it's not many people who've been upbraided in a fast-moving car. "Alderson, you fool! You've let me come without my eyeglasses!" The unfairness of this accusation had evidently never ceased to rankle.

6.00am Business Breakfast (56818)

7.00am BBC Breakfast News (CeeFax) (2968986)

9.10am Kilroy (s) (2704521)

9.10am News (CeeFax), regional news and weather (6097647) 10.05am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (s) (6058098) 10.30am Good Morning (s) (53453)

12.00am News (CeeFax), regional news and weather (6097647) 12.15pm Pebble Mill (2225095) 12.50am Regional News (1362025)

1.00am One O'Clock News (CeeFax) and weather (80078)

1.30am Neighbours (CeeFax) (s) (6409076)

1.50am Hawkeye (s) (1157230)

2.30am Holiday (s) (s) (4243453)

2.50am Timekeepers, Quiz (s) (5459705)

3.30am Moomin (1753076) 3.50am Bites (s) (1765404) 4.10am Rugs (s) (s) (9516653)

4.30am Agent Z and the Penguin from Mars (CeeFax) (s) (9713705) 5.00am Newsround (CeeFax) (1488927) 5.10am Blue Peter (CeeFax) (s) (733618)

5.30am Neighbours (s) (CeeFax) (s) (476182) NLI: 5.30 Inside Story

6.00am Six O'Clock News (CeeFax) and weather (811)

6.30am Regional News magazines (163) NLI: 6.30am Neighbours 6.57am Inside Story News

7.00am This Is Your Life Presented by Michael Aspel (CeeFax) (s) (3095)

7.30am May to December, Age-gap romantic comedy starring Anton Rodgers and Lesley Dunlop (s) (347)

8.00am How Do They Do That? The secrets of film and television revealed and achievements from the fields of medicine, science and entertainment (CeeFax) (s) (17927)

8.50am Points of View, Anne Robinson presents viewers' opinions on BBC programmes (CeeFax) (s) (762453)

9.55am Party Political Broadcast: By the Liberal Democrats (171724)

9.00am Nine O'Clock News (CeeFax) regional news and weather (2860)

9.30am Hetty Wainthropp Investigates, Willemine, Hetty is drawn to a small country village by the apparent suicide of Robert's uncle. All is not what it seems. Something evil caused the old man's death. With Patricia Routledge (57988)

10.30am Sportnight, With Des Lynam, featuring highlights of the European Figure Skating Championships and an interview with the England cricket captain, Mike Atherton, who reflects on the recent tour of South Africa and looks ahead to the World Cup. Also, news of tonight's football international between Italy and Wales in Tern (s) (5330328)

11.30am Film: Lethal Error (1991) starring Daniel Craig, a murder mystery based on a true story. Elizabeth Sargied must find the means to keep her son, who stands accused of murder with the prosecutor demanding the death penalty. Directed by Susan Rohrer (57095) WALEX: 11.30am News (57437) 12.10am Film: Lethal Error (1991) 1.40am News headlines and weather (293069)

1.00am Weather (4430448)

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6.00am Business: The Gender Business (78328) 6.30am Outward Bound (40960)

7.00am Breakfast News (CeeFax) (6048095)

7.15am Lassie (s) (3182873) 7.40am Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles (s) (7226238) 8.05am Run the Risk (s) (CeeFax) (s) (5279144)

8.35am The Outcasts (s) (640279) 9.00am Holiday Outings, Le Touquet (s) (6310988)

9.05am Daytime on Two, Educational programmes, Plus, for children, 10.00-10.30am Playdays (8957279)

2.00am Whishing (s) (s) (86418415)

2.10am The Andrew Neil Show (s) (5493328)

WALEX: 2.10-2.30am Bowls (5493328) 4.00-6.00am Bowls (5124)

3.00am News (CeeFax) and weather: Westminster with Nick Ross (CeeFax) (7116892) 3.55am News (CeeFax) and weather (5172415)

4.00am Today's 4.00 History quiz (s) (796)

4.30am Ready, Steady, Cook (s) (960)

5.00am The Oprah Winfrey Show, Fertility clinic scandals (CeeFax) (s) (7764892)

5.40am A Week to Remember (s) (258873)

5.50am A Different Country Practice, The work of the Airedale NHS Trust (192279)

6.00am Star Trek: The Next Generation, Science-fiction adventure series starring Patrick Stewart (CeeFax) (s) (418250)

6.45am The O Zone, Pop music magazine (411076) WALEX: 6.45am Della Smith's Winter Collection (228502) 7.15-9.30am Soccer: Italy v Wales (8017182)

7.00am Video Nation, Camcorder diaries (442908)

7.50am Top Gear Take Two, Steve Berry on a Honda Pacific Coast motorbikes (547601)

8.00am University Challenge, The opening contest of the second round is between Middlesex University and Selwyn College, Cambridge (CeeFax) (s) (7057)

8.30am Della Smith's Winter Collection, Winter-warmers from China, Thailand and Japan (CeeFax) (s) (5992)

9.00am Yes, Minister, Political comedy starring the late Paul Eddington as Jim Hacker, a malleable minister. With Nigel Hawthorne and Derek Fowlds (s) (3142)

9.30am Under the Sun: Fit For a King (CeeFax) (s) (900231)

10.20am What the Papers Say, With The Observer's John Sweeney (s) (195569)

10.30am Political Broadcast: Liberal Democrats (CeeFax) (s) (224273)

10.35am Newsnight (CeeFax) (549182)

11.20am The Big Idea, Andrew Marr is joined by the philosopher Peter Singer, who believes now is the right time to endorse what he describes as a "Copernican revolution of ethics" (127568)

11.50am The Midnight Hour with Andrew Neil, Political chat (s) (524215)

12.30am-6.00am The Learning Zone

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